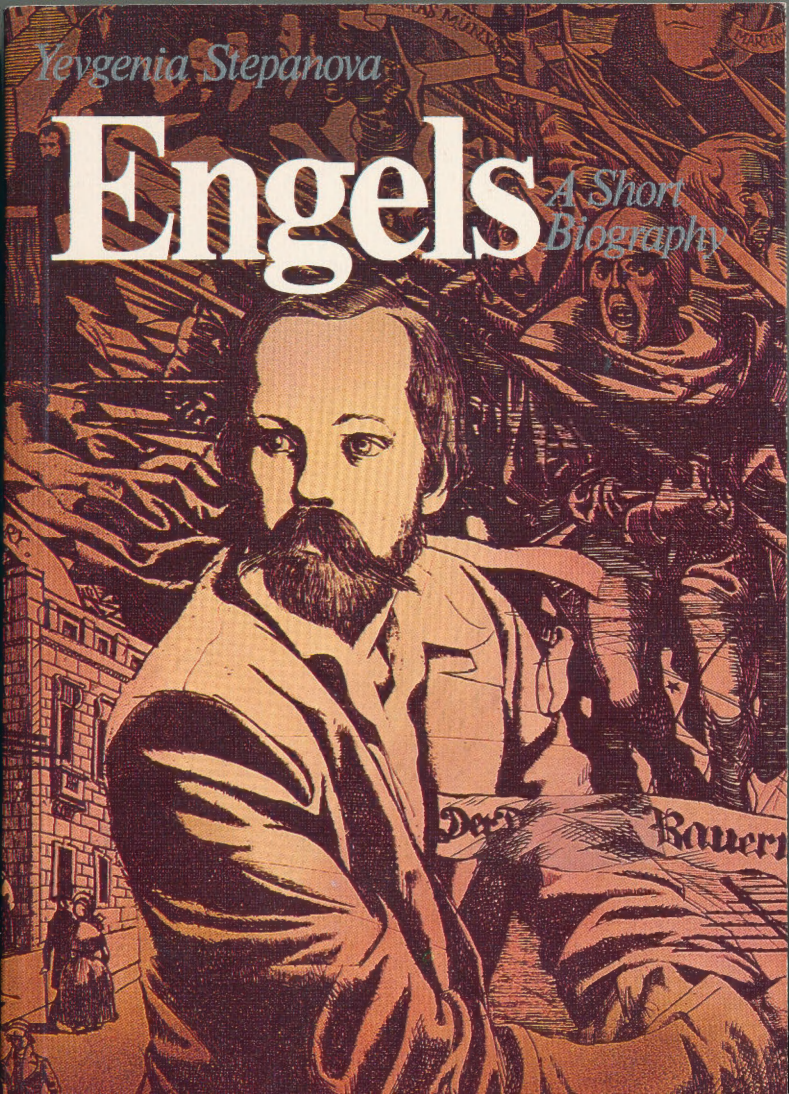


Yevgenia Stepanova

Engels

*A Short
Biography*



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Frederick Engels

*A Short
Biography*



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ФРИДРИХ ЭНГЕЛЬС. БИОГРАФИЧЕСКИЙ ОЧЕРК

На английском языке

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I. Childhood and adolescence

Frederick Engels was born on November 28, 1820, into the family of a Barmen textile manufacturer.

The Rhine Province of Prussia, in which Barmen is situated, was then the most developed industrial region of Germany. In contrast to the remainder of Germany where handicrafts and hand labour still prevailed, the Rhineland had the first factories and machines. It was here that large-scale capitalist industry, to which England had given birth, began its triumphant march across Germany.

This is explained by the fact that the Rhineland was richly endowed with natural wealth—coal and iron ore; moreover, the bourgeois revolution in France at the end of the eighteenth century had had more of an impact here than in the other parts of Germany: on the left bank of the Rhine, a region that was part of France in 1795-1815, feudal relations and serfdom had been abolished and a more progressive bourgeois legislation (*Code Napoléon*) instituted. Capitalist industry led to the appearance of an industrial proletariat, and the antagonism between the working class and bourgeoisie—a concomitant of capitalist society—became more pronounced.

The factory system brought with it much suffering and intensified exploitation for the workers. Machinery enabled manufacturers to employ female and child labour on an unprecedented scale, with the competition of the miserably paid women

and juveniles lowering the wages of men workers. And, as was the case everywhere, the rise of capitalism in the Rhineland was accompanied by the ruin of the peasantry, handicraftsmen and urban petty bourgeoisie.

The poverty and degradation which Engels witnessed in childhood in his native Wuppertal* made an indelible impression. In his first journalistic work, *Letters from Wuppertal* (1839), the eighteen-year-old Engels vividly described the plight of handicraftsmen, artisans and especially of factory workers in Barmen and Elberfeld. The chief reason for their poverty and suffering, Engels wrote, was the "reckless way" in which the factories were operated.

The effects of large-scale capitalist industry were felt also by the handicraftsmen and artisans. In order to compete with the factories, the weavers working at home sweated day and night and denied themselves prime necessities.

Wuppertal, the "German Manchester", a big textile centre, was also a stronghold of pietism—the most intolerant and philistine form of Protestantism. Engels in an early letter wrote of it as "Muckertal" (valley of bigots). The Bible and schnapps—these were the things with which the pious Wuppertal factory owners sought to "brighten" the lives of the workers and artisans, to divert them from struggle and secure their submission to the existing order.

"Public opinion" in the town was moulded by smooth-tongued preachers. Gatherings of believers were turned into trials of what they called heretics—the heretics being those who absented themselves from religious gatherings, who read novels or attended concerts. School education was conducted in the same spirit.

* Wuppertal valley of the Wupper River, where the towns of Barmen and Elberfeld, three hours' journey from each other, were merged and in 1830 formally renamed the city of Wuppertal.

Such was the social environment in which the impressionable and observant boy grew up.

Nor was his home life much better. Engels's father held conservative views, was deeply religious, and a despot. The entire family—including the mother, an intelligent and affectionate woman, trembled before him. Besides Frederick, the couple had three sons and four daughters. Frederick's brothers followed their father into the textile business, and his sisters married men of a similar milieu. Frederick was the only one to choose “so entirely different a path”, as Eleanor, Karl Marx's youngest daughter, wrote later. “Frederick must have been considered by his family as the ‘ugly duckling’.” * Eager and self-willed, Frederick early displayed his keen, penetrating intellect and independent character. The fifteen-year-old boy's up-bringing alarmed the father so much that in a letter to his wife we find the following:

“As you know, he has become more polite, outwardly, but in spite of the severe chastisements he received earlier, not even the fear of punishment seems to teach him unconditional obedience. Thus today I was again distressed to find in his desk a greasy book which he had borrowed from the lending library, a story about knights in the 13th century.... May God watch over his disposition, I am often fearful for this otherwise excellent boy.” **

Endowed with rare ability, Frederick displayed a keen interest in history, literature, art, music and languages. He wrote schoolboyish verses and drew quite appealing cartoons. Gay and happy by nature, Engels was endowed with good health, and an athletic constitution. He loved riding and fencing, and was an excellent swimmer. His liking for sports and physical exercise was lifelong.

* *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956, p. 183.

** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 582.

Engels planned to enter university, but in September 1837, on the insistence of his father, left the gymnasium before finishing the last class. His father, who had decided that his eldest son should be a merchant, wanted him to learn commerce. For a year he worked in his father's office, after which he was sent to a big trading firm in Bremen.

The young Engels, however, could not confine himself to office work. The prospect of becoming a merchant did not appeal to him in the least. He devoted his free time chiefly to reading, displaying an amazing capacity for work and an ability to make full use of his time.

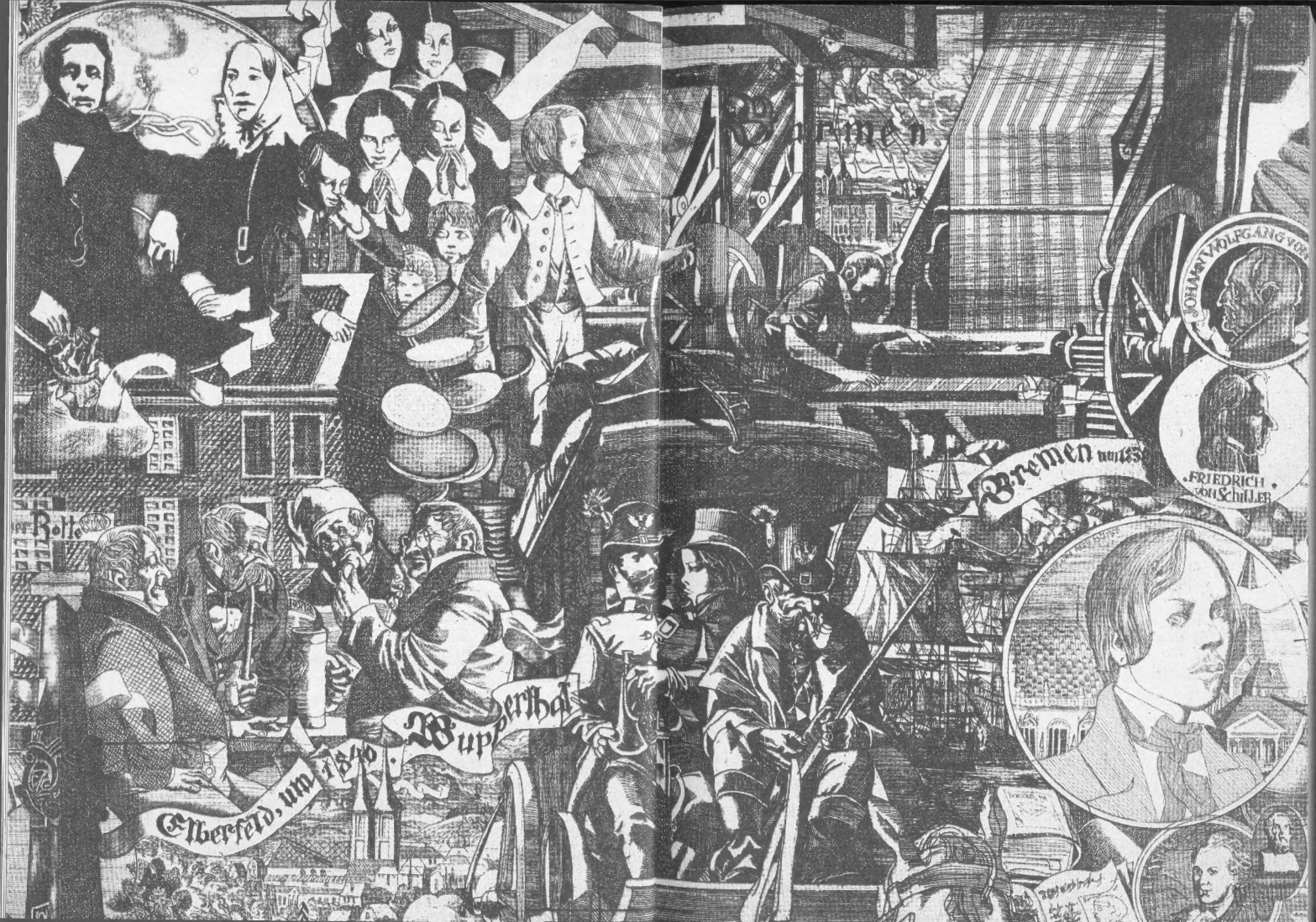
In Bremen, an important seaport, Engels read English, Dutch, French and other foreign newspapers. Books which were then outlawed in Germany fell into his hands, and he sent them on to his friends in Barmen. The books and newspapers enabled him to fill the gaps in his education and broadened his outlook. Reading foreign literature also helped him master a number of languages. In a letter to his sister Marie, he wrote that he could read in 25 languages. Sometimes he wrote "polyglot" letters to his friends, in which German alternated with Latin, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, English, Dutch and other languages.

Knowledge of foreign languages enabled Engels to read extensively, and he gradually became a brilliant judge of literature.

In Bremen he showed a flair for poetry. He dreamed of following in the footsteps of Ferdinand Freiligrath, a Barmen office-worker who had already earned esteem as a poet.

After the dull atmosphere in Wuppertal, Engels eagerly visited theatres and concert halls; he was fond of singing and music, especially Beethoven's





symphonies. The *Sinfonia Eroica* and *Fifth Symphony* were his favourites. As hitherto, he also found time for swimming, fencing and riding.

In Bremen, as in Wuppertal, the young man turned his attention to the life of the workers, deeply sympathised with the needs of the working people who had nothing, but who were "the best any king can have in his realm".*

Engels's keen interest in the life of the people and his inborn humanism sharpened his critical attitude towards the world into which he had been born, towards the views and prejudices of the business and clerical community in which he had been brought up.

His father, worried about his son's spiritual development, arranged for him to stay with a Bremen pastor. But it was while under the pastor's roof that Frederick was assailed by grave doubts and forever abandoned the faith of his fathers.

His deep inner struggle was vividly reflected in letters to his classmates, the Graeber brothers, Wilhelm and Friedrich. Having reached the conclusion that the Bible contained insoluble contradictions and that it was impossible to reconcile science and religion, Engels resolutely renounced the traditions and outlook of his family and friends.

"I know," he wrote to Friedrich Graeber on June 15, 1839, "that I am going to get into the greatest unpleasantnesses through this, but what forces itself on me so convincingly, I cannot drive away, no matter how much I might like to.... When it is a matter of defending the freedom of reason, then I protest against all compulsion."***

Tremendous will-power and unswerving commitment to principle stood out in the letters of the young Engels to his friends.

Engels's final break with religion came about



under the influence of David Strauss's *The Life of Jesus*, which appeared in 1835-36 and which demonstrated that the gospels contained legend and myth handed down by the early Christian communities. In a letter to Wilhelm Graeber, dated October 8, 1839, Engels told him that he had become an "enthusiastic Straussian", that thanks to Strauss faith turned out to be "as full of holes as a sponge".***

Engels began to give more thought to social and political matters. The situation in Germany and in the neighbouring countries at that time, shortly before the revolutions of the mid-century, supplied ample food for thought and did much to mould the views of the young Engels.

II. Beginning of Engels's Political Activity

Engels's youth and the evolution of his political views coincided with a period of acute class struggle in a number of West-European countries. The July revolution of 1830 in France was a turning point. Although its immediate result was the replacement of a semi-feudal monarchy by a monarchy supported by the big financiers and stock-exchange speculators, its thunder reverberated throughout Europe. It was followed by uprisings in Belgium, Poland, Italy and Spain. In France, the bourgeois revolution of 1830 in which the working class played a decisive role on the barricades, was followed by the first independent class battles of the proletariat (the uprisings of the Lyons weavers in 1831 and 1834). In England, too, the class struggle gained in intensity. The Parliamentary Reform of 1832 paved the way to power for the industrial bourgeoisie, a development which accentuated the antagonisms between the latter and the proletariat. The workers, who had taken an active part in the fight for the parliamentary reform and who had backed the political demands of the bourgeoisie, saw their betrayal and responded to it with an independent working-class movement, Chartism.

The news of the July revolution in France gave rise to popular discontent in some parts of the economically backward, and politically dismembered Germany. But the German governments quickly recovered from their momentary panic and set about with redoubled ferocity to crush the slightest

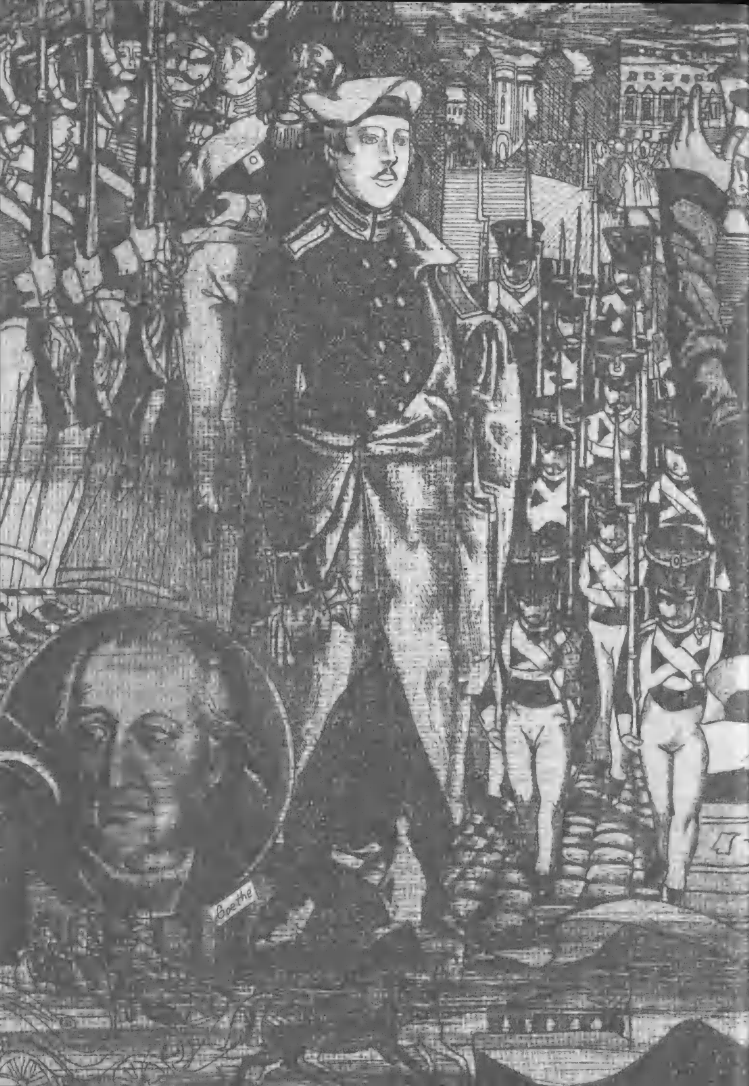
signs of political disaffection. It seemed that a graveyard peace again settled over Germany. But only in appearance. The police was no longer able to stem the flood-tide of discontent. The second half of the 1830s and the early 1840s saw an invigoration of public life and the birth of various opposition trends among the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia. This opposition, strongest in the Rhine Province, was directed against the autocratic Prussian monarchy, the feudal lords, and the police. The opposition, not yet strong enough to organise political parties, formed circles which criticised society and its rulers in literary and philosophical works.

The Left wing of the Hegelian school—the Young (or Left) Hegelians—belonged to this opposition.

The great service of Hegel, that prominent figure in Germany's classical philosophy, was that he regarded all phenomena in the world dialectically, in the context of their rise, development and extinction. The dialectical method was progressive as compared with the metaphysical method which conceived the world as immovable, immutable, and eternal. By his dialectical method, Hegel sought to pinpoint the inner laws of development in nature and in human society, and to show the struggle of opposites which underlies all development.

However, for all his encyclopaedic knowledge and progressive method, Hegel failed to carry out his self-imposed task. His philosophical system had a vital defect: he was an idealist, and his dialectics was likewise idealistic. He believed that development in nature and society was governed by an "absolute idea", which had existed somewhere even before the world took shape. Hegel's "absolute idea", which he portrayed as the creator of na-

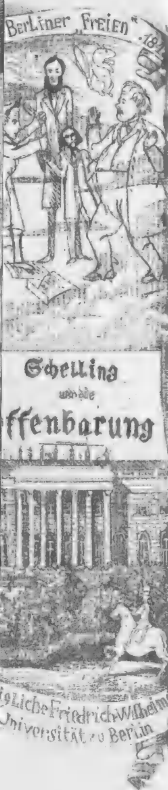




ture and human society, was in the final analysis a philosophical expression for a belief in God. Thus, the splendid edifice of Hegelian philosophy rested on a defective foundation — on a fantastic belief in a Creator.

By virtue of his idealist outlook, Hegel substituted the “self-developing concept” for real development in nature and society, thus standing everything on its head and distorting the real connection between phenomena. The progressive method in Hegel’s philosophy was at loggerheads with its conservative system. Hegel regarded his philosophical system as the summit of man’s knowledge, thus giving it metaphysical, dogmatic overtones. For the sake of this system and his conservative political views Hegel applied dialectics only to the past, not to the present and not to the future. Thus, contrary to his dialectical method, he saw in the monarchy with social estates, as promised to his subjects by the Prussian King Frederick William III, the “crowning” point in human history, an ideal state that did not need to be altered.

Those followers of Hegel who had been influenced by the 1830 revolution in France, by the upsurge in public life and the growing social and political contradictions in Germany, drew a different conclusion. If everything changes, if everything is sooner or later doomed to destruction and makes way for the new, was it not natural to assume an end would also come to the Prussian monarchy, to the domination of feudal lords and to police abuses? The Young Hegelians endeavoured to draw radical political conclusions from the master’s philosophy. And since in the Germany of those days politics was a prohibited domain, they directed their criticism chiefly against religion, one of the pillars of the Prussian monarchy.



The criticism of religion in Strauss's *Life of Jesus* started Engels on his study of the Hegelian philosophy. "Through Strauss", he wrote to Friedrich Graeber on January 21, 1840, "I have now entered on the straight road to Hegelianism." * He wrote that every evening he studied Hegel's *Philosophy of History* with the greatest interest.

But, as he wrote to Graeber, he could not become "an inveterate Hegelian". Neither Hegel's doctrine nor the ideas of the Left Hegelians could satisfy him: engrossed in philosophy and religion, they were remote from life, from practice and from politics. This defect, Engels held, was remedied by Ludwig Börne, whom, in a letter to Wilhelm Graeber, he enthusiastically described as "the great fighter for freedom and justice".

Ludwig Börne, German critic and publicist, ridiculed scholars who sought to escape from reality to the cloudy spheres of "pure theory". In his view, the writer, poet and scholar should in the first place be a citizen. Börne regarded his pen a weapon in the political struggle. He saw his task in awakening the German people from their sleep under the protection of police "nurses", calling on them to "throw off their blankets". The passionate calls to fight for freedom, which this writer and exile addressed to the German people—especially the youth—and his prodigious struggle against German cosmopolitanism, endeared him to young Engels.

Hegel and Börne, wrote Engels, seemed to complement one another. While Hegel was a philosopher and thinker, Börne was a man of political practice, able, like no other, to depict the greatness of a cause. And Engels stressed the need for unity and interaction between science and life, philosophy and politics, theory and practice.

* Marx, Engels.
Collected Works,
Vol. 2, p. 489.

Engels's letters to his friends and his first literary efforts testify to his political interests and revolutionary sentiment.

On the ninth anniversary of the July revolution Engels wrote a poem which reminded the German rulers that

*Now a storm blows up out of France, and the
people rise up in their masses,
And your throne is rocked like a skiff in the storm
and your hand loses hold of the sceptre.**

Engels dreamed of the day when "the old world will tumble in ruins" and strove for "the crown of life, action". **

He found inspiration in the image of Siegfried, the hero of German legend, and Wilhelm Tell, the legendary fighter for Swiss independence, though, in fact, the hero cult was foreign to him. In an unfinished outline of a verse drama about Cola di Rienzi, a republican and a talented tribune, and leader of an anti-feudal revolt in Rome (in the mid-fourteenth century), Engels demonstrated that a hero who forfeited the trust and backing of the people thereby destroyed himself and his cause.

Some of his verse and articles appeared in the Hamburg *Telegraph für Deutschland*, organ of the Young Germany radical literary group, the members of which were influenced by Heine and Börne. Despite its ideological immaturity and the vagueness of its political views, Engels was drawn to the group by its desire to bring literature closer to life, to involve it in the political struggle. This, however, did not prevent him from adopting a critical attitude towards the Young Germany poets and writers. For instance, he ridiculed the tendency of some of them to complain about "world-weariness",

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2., p. 464.

** *Ibid.*, p. 135.

and poured scorn on their wails of woe and pessimism. Engels himself was never downhearted. The prospect of struggle thrilled him. He was confident of victory. For his poem *An Evening* he borrows the epigraph from Shelley, his favourite English poet, "Tomorrow comes!". In this poem he depicted the almost complete gloom which reigned in Germany:

*How long must night's oppression keep us
under?
The melancholy moon peers through the cloud,
And white mists, bivouacked in the vales below,
Hide all that lives on earth beneath their
shroud.
Like blind men tapping through the dark we
go.**

But no matter how gloomy the picture, young Engels did not lose heart. He knew that night would pass, that "a new day's coming—Freedom's day!" He dreamed of the time when "new flowers shall grow" and when

*All earth shall be their garden full of light;
All plants shall flourish in far alien lands.
The Palm of Peace shall grace the Northern
strands,
The Rose of Love shall crown the frozen
wight.***

Engels was disappointed at not being able to express his thoughts in pure poetic form. Gradually, he relinquished the lyre for the journalist's pen.

His first journalistic work *Letters from Wuppertal*—anonymously published in the *Telegraph für Deutschland*, caused a storm of indignation

* *Ibid.*, p. 111.

** *Ibid.*, pp. 107-08.

among pietists and exploiters, pilloried by Engels. There was much speculation concerning the identity of the writer. Some believed that he was Ferdinand Freiligrath, others said it was Karl Gutzkow, editor of the *Telegraph*. It never occurred to anyone that the man who had caused such a stir was a member of a highly-respected Barmen family. Letting friends into the secret, Engels asked them to keep it under their hat, for otherwise he "could get into a hell of a lot of trouble". *

In his articles, published first anonymously and then mostly under the pseudonym of Friedrich Oswald, and in letters to his friends, Engels was an ardent revolutionary democrat. Hatred for the monarchy, profound sympathy with the downtrodden, and a powerful revolutionary temperament made themselves strongly felt. "There never was a time richer in royal crimes than that of 1816-30," he wrote to a friend, "almost every prince then ruling deserved the death penalty." His greatest hatred and scorn were reserved for Frederick William III, this "shabby, rotten, goddamned king". "Oh," Engels exclaimed at the end of his letter, "I could tell you killing stories about how the princes love their subjects... I expect anything good only of that prince whose ears are boxed right and left by his people and whose palace windows are smashed by the flying stones of the revolution." **

It hardly needs saying that Engels had no opportunity for expressing his political views in the press. Still, in his articles he denounced the monarchy, the estates, the privileges of the nobility and the arbitrary actions of landlords and officialdom.

He poured ridicule on the haughty élite who boasted of their ancient lineage, the "knights... each of them every inch a baron, each drop of their blood the fruit of sixty-four nuptials between

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 426.

** *Ibid.*, p. 493.

partners of equal rank, each glance a challenge!"* He denounced feudal landownership and predicted that sooner or later the wrath of the landless would descend on the nobility and on the monarchy of which they were the buttress. To the system of estates and privileges he counterposed the slogan: "No estates, but a great, united nation of citizens with equal rights!"**

In his articles, Engels declared the need for bourgeois-democratic changes in Germany, above all the unification of the economically and politically fragmented country, in those days a conglomeration of 34 states and four free cities. "So long as our Fatherland remains split," he wrote, "we shall be politically null, and public life, developed constitutionalism, freedom of the press, and all else that we demand will be mere pious wishes always only half-fulfilled."***

Engels made fun of Teutonicism and of Germanophiles, of the idea that Germans were the chosen people, of attempts to ignore the progressive achievements of other nations. But he also rejected the other extreme — national nihilism.

Those were the political ideas developed by Engels in articles and letters written during his stay in Bremen. They widened the breach between Engels and his old school friends. Horrified by his political views, they tried to "reason" with him, but all they got for their pains was a firm rebuff.

"You in particular," he wrote on November 20, 1840, to Wilhelm Graeber, "should be ashamed to inveigh against my political truths, you political sleepyhead. If you are left to sit quietly in your rural parsonage, for you will hardly expect a higher position, and to go out for a walk every evening with Frau Pastor and eventually with the young little Pastors, and nobody fires off a cannon-ball

* *Ibid.*, p. 68.

** *Ibid.*, p. 146.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 150.

under your nose, you are blissfully happy and don't trouble yourself about the sinful F. Engels who argues against the established order. Oh you heroes!"*

That was one of the last letters to his school friends. He could not but feel that after his two years and more in Bremen a gulf had opened between them. During these years, Engels fought a painful inner battle to shake off the traditional religious notions drummed into him from childhood, to adopt Hegel's teaching in its revolutionary interpretation, passing from a confused discontent with his surroundings to a revolutionary democratic outlook.

Breadth of vision, a revolutionary temperament, deep sympathy with the suffering of the working masses and militant humanism—those were the qualities that enabled Engels to rise high above his environment.

* * *

In the spring of 1841 Engels paid a visit to Wuppertal and soon after went to Berlin to do military service. In the capital of Prussia, a dull centre of officialdom, there was a place, however, where heated arguments and lively ideological struggles were the order of the day—Berlin University. Engels wished to take part in this battle of ideas and to continue his education.

Before departing for Berlin he made a tour of Switzerland and Northern Italy. His diary shows that at that time he experienced his first love. He relates how he stood on one of the Alpine peaks "with a heart that only a month ago had been filled with infinite bliss and now was torn and desolate. And what pain has more right to speak out in face of the beauty of nature than the noblest and most

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 514.

25

Beginning of Engels's Political Activity

*A swarthy chap of Trier, a marked monstrosity.
He neither hops nor skips, but moves in leaps and
bounds,
Raving aloud. As if to seize and then pull down
To Earth the spacious tent of Heaven up on high,
He opens wide his arms and reaches for the sky.***

■ *Ibid.*, p. 173.
 ** *Ibid.*, p. 336.

*Right on the very left, that tall and long-legged
stepper
Is Oswald, coat of grey and trousers shade of
pepper;
Pepper inside as well, Oswald the Montagnard;
A radical is he, dyed in the wool, and hard.
Day in, day out, he plays upon the guillotine a
Single solitary tune and that's a cavatina,
The same old devil-song; he bellows the refrain:
Formez vos bataillons! Aux armes, citoyens!**

Marx left Berlin in the spring of 1841, but Engels, who had missed meeting him at the time, heard much about him from his new acquaintances. In the following spring (1842) Marx joined the staff of the *Rheinische Zeitung* and in October of that year became its editor; Engels wrote a series of articles for it.

Soon after his arrival in Berlin, Engels flung himself whole-heartedly into the philosophical battles then being waged by the Young Hegelians. His article, "Schelling on Hegel", under the pen-name Friedrich Oswald, appeared in the *Telegraph für Deutschland* in December 1841; in the spring of 1842 he wrote his anonymous pamphlet *Schelling and Revelation*, which was followed almost at once by another, also anonymous pamphlet entitled *Schelling, Philosopher in Christ, or the Transfiguration of Worldly Wisdom into Divine Wisdom*. These works criticised Schelling's reactionary, idealist views.

The subtitle of *Schelling and Revelation—Critique of the Latest Attempt of Reaction against the Free Philosophy*--explains why young Engels rushed into battle against the renowned German philosopher. The Prussian Government, which had looked on Hegel's philosophy as a royal Prussian

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 2, p. 335.

state philosophy, was alarmed by the radical conclusions the Young Hegelians drew from the doctrine of their master. Pinning its hopes on religion and the church, the government had no intention of letting Berlin University and the universities in other cities become centres of religious and political free thought. It dismissed the professors who adhered to the Hegelian philosophy, and brought Schelling into Berlin University so that his philosophical system could be put, as Engels expressed it, "at the disposal ... of the King of Prussia". It never entered the venerable professor's head that in the person of the modest volunteer, the external student lost in the sea of faces in the lecture hall, he would meet such a doughty opponent.

Comparing his notes of the lectures with those of two other fellow-students, Engels set to work. With all the ardour and passion of youth, the student, soldier and philosopher came to grips with the famous scholar. "It is fit for a fighter," he wrote, "to have a certain amount of passion: he who draws the sword in cold blood rarely has much enthusiasm for the cause for which he is fighting." *

Engels ruthlessly criticised Schelling for trying to reconcile religion with science, faith with knowledge.

Unlike Schelling, who was out to wreck Hegel's philosophy, Engels defended the progressive elements in Hegel. At the same time, he drew attention to Hegel's inconsistency, to the profound contradiction between his "restless dialectics" and his conservative political conclusions.

In criticising Schelling's reactionary, mystical philosophy, Engels was the first among the Young Hegelians to unfurl the banner of atheism. "All the basic principles of Christianity," he wrote, "and

* *Ibid.*, p. 185.

even of what has hitherto been called religion itself, have fallen before the inexorable criticism of reason.”* He repeatedly referred to the impression made on him by Ludwig Feuerbach’s *Essence of Christianity* (1841), which criticised religion from the materialist standpoint. In contrast to Hegel, Feuerbach maintained that not the “absolute idea”, not the spirit, but Nature was primary, and that not God had created man, but man had created God.

Engels’s works against Schelling, though written in the main from an idealist point of view, already intimated a switch from idealism to materialism. They were distinguished from those of the other Young Hegelians also by their militant, revolutionary nature, by their active political character. Engels was aware that the issue was not a purely philosophical dispute with Schelling, but a struggle against reaction upheld by the Prussian monarchy. These articles on philosophy were permeated with deep confidence in the victory of the approaching revolution. The young Engels welcomed it, and finished his *Schelling and Revelation* with the call: “Let us fight and bleed, look undismayed into the grim eye of the enemy and hold out to the end! Do you see our flags wave from the mountain peaks? Do you see the swords of our comrades glinting, the plumes on the helmets fluttering? They are coming, they are coming, from all valleys, from all heights they are streaming towards us with song and the call of trumpets; the day of the great decision, of the battle of the nations, is approaching, and victory must be ours!”**

Only a few people knew that the writings which sharply and devastatingly criticised the renowned philosopher Schelling, came from the pen not of a “man of science”, but from that of Frederick

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2., p. 197.

** *Ibid.*, p. 240.

Engels, a former office worker in Bremen, now a volunteer artillery man.

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Beginning of Engels's
Political Activity

Arnold Ruge, editor of the *Deutsche Jahrbücher*, who lauded the pamphlet *Schelling and Revelation* in a review in his magazine, asked why the work had not been sent to him for publication. Convinced that it could have been written only by a learned philosopher, Ruge referred to its author as Doctor. Engels cleared up the misunderstanding. In a letter to Ruge he wrote: "Apart from all this, I am not a Doctor and cannot ever become one. I am only a merchant and a Royal Prussian artilleryman, so kindly spare me that title."*

In the same letter Engels informed Ruge that he was sending him an article criticising Alexander Jung's lectures on contemporary German literature. He censured members of the Young Germany group for neglecting political activity, lack of principles in philosophical disputes, the ideological weakness of their literary works, and for indulging in petty squabbles.

His final break with the Young Germany group was one more milestone in the development of the young Engels.

In another letter to Ruge, which is of great biographical interest, Engels informed him that he had decided to give up all literary work for a while. He wrote: "I am young and self-taught in philosophy. I have learnt enough to form my own viewpoint and, when necessary, to defend it, but not enough to be able to work for it with success and in the proper way. All the greater demands will be made on me because I am a 'travelling agent' in philosophy and have not earned the right to philosophise by getting a doctor's degree.... Regarded subjectively, my literary activities have so far been mere experiments from the outcome of which I was to

* *Ibid.*, p. 543.

learn whether my natural capacities were such as to enable me to work fruitfully and effectively for progress and to participate actively in the movement of the century. I can be satisfied with the results and now regard it as my duty to acquire by study, which I now continue with redoubled zest, also more and more of that which one is not born with.”*

It is clear from his letter that Engels was highly exigent with his literary and political endeavours, and that he set himself exacting and lofty aims.

He completed his period of military service on October 8, 1842. He returned to Barmen, and his father suggested that he should go to England to acquire commercial experience in the Manchester office of the Ermen and Engels textile firm. Evidently, his father not only wanted his son to improve his commercial competence, but was also anxious to send him away from Germany where revolution was then brewing. Although Engels had never signed his name to any of his press articles, it seems that his revolutionary democratic views were no secret to the family. Whether or not he objected to his father's suggestion is not known. Possibly it coincided with his own wishes. In any case, as time was to prove, the sojourn in England richly rewarded the young man and proved a turning point in his development.

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 2, pp. 545-46.

III. Adoption of Materialism and Communism

On a foggy November day in 1842 Frederick Engels arrived in London. In those days, the English capital differed from the capital of Prussia as the classical country of capitalism, the birthplace of large-scale machine industry, Britain differed from the then backward and mainly agricultural Germany.

In the mid-eighteenth century, Britain was still a country of small towns, a poorly developed industry and a population that was overwhelmingly agricultural. The industrial revolution in the latter half of the eighteenth century transformed the country. The invention of machines in the cotton, woollen and other branches of industry, the appearance of steam-driven machinery, and the establishment of factories, turned Britain into an industrial land. In addition to London, large manufacturing cities with a numerous working-class population grew up. New classes made their appearance—the industrial bourgeoisie and the English proletariat, which was, as Engels put it, “the mightiest result of this industrial transformation”.*

No other country at that time presented such a contrast of misery and suffering for the workers and wealth and luxury for the propertied classes; nowhere else were the contradictions between proletariat and bourgeoisie so glaring as in Britain. The sharpness of the class contradictions so impressed Engels that he began one of his first articles with the question: Is a revolution possible or prob-

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1975, p. 320.

able in England? He answered by saying that British industry had created a propertyless class which was daily increasing in numbers and becoming more and more aware that only the forcible overthrow of the existing relations, of the landed and manufacturing aristocracy, could improve the condition of the proletariat. Engels saw the proletariat as the social force that would carry out social revolution.

He studied with attention and sympathy the condition of the workers, their lives, views and the forms and methods of their struggle. Nor did he confine himself to studying books and official documents. In the address *To the Working Classes of Great Britain*, which was a preface to his *Condition of the Working-Class in England*, he wrote: "I wanted to see you in your own homes, to observe you in your everyday life, to chat with you on your condition and grievances, to witness your struggles against the social and political power of your oppressors... I forsook the company and the dinner-parties, the port-wine and champagne of the middle-classes, and devoted my leisure-hours almost exclusively to the intercourse with plain Working-Men; I am both glad and proud of having done so."*

Engels roamed the noisy streets of London, Leeds and Manchester, and the wretched working-class quarters. He made a special study of Manchester, where he spent most of his stay in England. When free from his duties in the office, he visited the workers' districts. Often he was accompanied by the girl he loved, an Irish working woman, Mary Burns, whom he had met in Manchester.

Sometimes he was accompanied in his wanderings by Georg Weerth, the German poet, who wrote a series of articles about the condition of the

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 4, p. 297.

English workers, one of which ended with the words: "This concludes my brief essay about the proletariat of Britain and I am happy that one of Germany's outstanding philosophical minds is now writing a comprehensive book about the life of the English workers; it will be of inestimable significance".*

Engels's residence in England coincided with the revival of Chartism, "the first broad, truly mass and politically organised proletarian revolutionary movement".**

Engels studied Chartism not merely as an on-looker. According to his own words, he "openly aligned" himself with the Chartist movement.*** He attended Chartist gatherings and meetings and made contact with the leaders of its Left wing. Many years afterwards, George Julian Harney, one of the Left leaders, recalled how a well-built, handsome young man speaking excellent English walked into the offices of the Chartist newspaper *The Northern Star*. He introduced himself as a regular reader of the paper and said he was very interested in the Chartist movement. This was Engels.****

Soon Engels became a regular contributor to the newspaper. He wrote articles about the socialist and communist movement on the Continent, particularly in Germany where, according to him, a revolution was maturing. He paid great attention to the Silesian weavers' uprising in June 1844. Oppression and exhausting toil, discontent and riots, Engels wrote, "exist among the hills of Silesia, as well as in the crowded cities of Lancashire and Yorkshire".*****

He contacted followers of the utopian socialist Robert Owen and contributed to their newspaper *The New Moral World*. In his articles he acquaint-

* *Rheinische Jahrbücher zur gesellschaftlichen Reform*, Erster Band, Darmstadt, 1845, S. 326.

** V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, Moscow, 1977, p. 309.

*** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1976, p. 389.

**** *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 192.

***** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1975, p. 531.

ed the English workers with the socialist and communist movement in France, Germany and Switzerland, with the views of the French utopian socialists Henri Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier, and with the outlook of Étienne Cabet, Pierre Leroux, Pierre Joseph Proudhon and Wilhelm Weitling. In condensed form he wrote about the German philosophers Kant, Fichte and Schelling, and about Hegel. Describing the views of the French utopian socialists and the German classical philosophers, Engels criticised their weak sides and defects, and drew attention to the positive aspects of their works, to what each had contributed to world culture.

Analysing the prospects of socialism in Germany, Engels thought that the Germans, whom he characterised as a nation of philosophers, would arrive at communism in their own "philosophical" way, that conditions were ripe in Germany for forming a communist party from among the educated and propertied classes.

In an article headed "Progress of Social Reform on the Continent", Engels wrote that as early as in the autumn of 1842 some of the Young Hegelians "contended for the insufficiency of political change, and declared their opinion to be, that a *Social* revolution based upon common property, was the only state of mankind agreeing with their abstract principles".* Among these Left Hegelians he mentioned Karl Marx, and included himself. It follows, therefore, that even before setting out for England he had taken the first step towards communism, but a communism of a highly indefinite and vague character.

It was during his sojourn in England that Engels became a confirmed Communist. His writings of that time were expressive of his own, independent

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 3, p. 406.

approach to the materialist outlook and communism—an approach based on his own experience and scientific knowledge.

The important phase in the evolution of his views is clearly reflected in his *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy* published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, which appeared in February 1844 in Paris under the editorship of Marx and Arnold Ruge. Although these outlines are not the work of a mature Marxist, they, as Marx wrote, “have already formulated certain general principles of scientific socialism”.* At a later period Marx described them as “a brilliant essay on the critique of economic categories”**, and Engels himself wrote in 1884 that notwithstanding its deficiencies he was quite proud of this first product of his pen in the field of social science.

In these outlines, Engels criticised bourgeois political economy, and consequently capitalism, from the standpoint of the proletariat. In contrast to bourgeois economists, even the best of whom, such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo, held that the laws of capitalism were eternal and immutable, Engels regarded them as conditioned by history and transient. In Lenin’s words, Engels “examined the principal phenomena of the contemporary economic order from a socialist standpoint, regarding them as necessary consequences of the rule of private property”***.

Criticising bourgeois economists who disguised the selfish interests of the bourgeoisie in hypocritical humanist phraseology, Engels came to the conclusion that “the nearer the economists come to the present time, the further they depart from honesty”****. He assailed the reactionary misanthropic “theory” expounded by Malthus that the ten-

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 19, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, S. 181.

** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, Moscow, 1987, p. 264.

*** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1972, p. 24.

**** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 420.

dency of the population to multiply always exceeded the means of subsistence. Malthus blamed Nature for the defects and maladies of capitalism. Engels wrathfully exposed "this vile, infamous theory, this hideous blasphemy against Nature and mankind".*

He adduced proof that the productive forces at the disposal of man were boundless, that science was increasingly extending man's dominion over Nature. One thing only was needed — conscious utilisation of the productive forces in the interests of all. And that was possible only if private property did not rule society and, consequently, there were no extremes of poverty and wealth.

Having adopted the communist outlook, Engels also abandoned idealism for materialism.

The philosophers were divided into the two great camps of materialists and idealists — depending on how they conceived the relationship between thinking and being, between the spirit and Nature. Those who held that the development of the spirit determined the development of Nature, and who, therefore, in the final analysis, believed in the Creation, belonged to the idealist camp. While those who held that Nature came first, belonged to the various materialist schools.

The works written by Engels in England reveal a clear and definite advance towards the materialist outlook. For example, in an article on Carlyle's *Past and Present*, Engels criticised the author from a materialist, atheistic standpoint for his attempt to found a new religion. Opposing Carlyle's idealist philosophical views and his "hero-worship", Engels underlined the decisive role of the masses in translating advanced ideas into life. Engels's adoption of materialism is clearly expressed in the analysis of the political system and social relations in

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 3., p. 437.

England, contained in articles published at that time in the *Rheinische Zeitung* and *Schweizerischer Republikaner*. He arrived at the conclusion that behind the political struggle in England lay the material interests of different classes; he disclosed the class character of the parties battling in the political arena, and the class nature of the English state. The Conservatives or Tories, as Engels saw it, were the party of the aristocracy and the reactionary clergy, while the Liberal Party—the Whigs—was the party of the manufacturers and merchants. The Chartists and their principles reflected the collective mind of the workers. In an article headed “The Condition of England. II. The English Constitution”, printed in *Vorwärts!*, a German paper published in Paris, Engels examined electoral procedure in Britain, which in those days disenfranchised the majority of the workers. He described the mechanism of parliamentary elections—the dependence of the rural voter on the will of the squire, and the corrupt practices which ensured a docile parliamentary majority for the propertied classes.

To the question “Who then actually rules in England?” Engels answered, “Property rules.” Exposing the class character of the English Constitution and the limitations of the bourgeois freedoms, Engels described the genuine social democracy that would come as a result of the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and private property. The principles of this democracy, he added, would be the principles of socialism.

He summed up his study of English social relations and especially the life and struggle of the proletariat in his *Condition of the Working-Class in England*, completed after his meeting with Marx and published in Germany in 1845. As Engels him-



self said later, this was a pioneer effort, one of the first essays in the direction of scientific communism; the origin of scientific communism could still be traced from one of its forerunners — German classical philosophy. At the same time, as Engels said, the book showed to what extent he had managed by the mid-1840s to acquire an understanding of the role of the economic factor in the development of society, that is, a materialist understanding of history. This early book by Engels is still one of the finest works in socialist literature.

It analysed the profound consequences of the industrial revolution in England, which brought with it large-scale machine industry and the rise of the proletariat. It disclosed a number of the laws governing capitalist production — cyclical economic crises, the appearance of a reserve army of unemployed and, with the expansion of capitalist production, greater exploitation of the working people. Vividly and truthfully described is the plight of the workers, their miserable wages, long hours, bad housing, the onerous labour of women and children, and the desperate situation of the unemployed. The conclusion is that the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are irreconcilable.

Engels showed the fundamental difference between the status of the modern wage-earner and the slave and serf: "The slave is assured of a bare livelihood by the self-interest of his master, the serf has at least a scrap of land on which to live; each has at worst a guarantee for life itself. But the proletarian must depend upon himself alone, and is yet prevented from so applying his abilities as to be able to rely upon them."*

Engels saw the difference between the working class and the other oppressed and exploited classes not only in its extreme insecurity and its constant





Cover of the first
edition of Engels's
*The Condition of the
Working-Class in
England*

uncertainty of the future. He saw the proletariat as the class whose mode of existence created the requisites for its unity and organisation, for fulfilling its historical mission — the abolition of capitalism.

He examined the forms and methods of struggle employed by the working class — from the primitive spontaneous forms of protest against the inhu-

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 4, p. 413.

man exploitation to more organised and conscious forms and methods.

Initially, the anger of the workers against the bourgeoisie took the form of struggle against the introduction of machines. Engels mentions cases of workers persecuting inventors, wrecking machines, and rioting. Often this culminated in the destruction of factories. The workers were as yet unaware that not the machine as such caused their terrible poverty, but the capitalist mode of production based on private ownership of machines, factory premises and raw materials. In short, they failed to distinguish between the machine and its capitalist application.

The workers soon realised, however, that wrecking machines and destroying factories did not yield the desired results. Other forms of protest were needed. They organised trade unions and held strikes. As distinct from the utopian socialists, Engels stressed the tremendous role played by strikes in uniting the workers and enhancing their solidarity and organisation. The strikes "are the military school of the working-men in which they prepare themselves for the great struggle which cannot be avoided; they are the pronunciamientos of single branches of industry that these too have joined the labour movement."*

Even before this, English workers had given examples of higher forms of struggle. From isolated battles against single capitalists for higher wages they switched to struggle against the collective power of the ruling classes — against the capitalist state.

Chartism, wrote Engels at the time, was the compact form of the workers' opposition to the bourgeoisie. He amplified: "In the Unions and turnouts opposition always remained isolated: it was single

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 512.

working-men or sections who fought a single bourgeois.... But in Chartism it is the whole working-class which arises against the bourgeoisie, and attacks, first of all, the political power, the legislative rampart with which the bourgeoisie has surrounded itself.”*

The Chartist movement, which, as Lenin put it, brilliantly anticipated much of the future Marxism, exerted a tremendous influence on Engels. Though he rated it highly and took an active part in it, he was also aware of its grave shortcomings. He criticised the Chartist idea of “lawful” revolution, which, as he pointed out, was in itself a contradiction and, from the practical point of view, impossible. As he saw it, the basic weakness of the Chartists was that “their socialism is very little developed”, the socio-economic measures advanced by some of their leaders for abolishing poverty, such as sharing out the land among the workers, made no sense in view of the development of large-scale industry.

That the Chartist movement failed to understand the need to abolish private ownership of the means of production, and that it failed to inscribe socialist slogans on its banner, was, in large measure, the fault of the English socialists. Robert Owen, leader and theoretician of English socialism, like the great French utopian socialists Saint-Simon and Fourier, stood aloof from the mass working-class movement and denied the need for political struggle.

Owen’s merit was that he exposed the ills of capitalist society and showed sympathy for the suffering of the toiling masses. Owen, a factory owner and philanthropist, and later a socialist, wanted to cure the ills of society. But, like the socialism advocated by Saint-Simon and Fourier, his utopian so-

* *Ibid.*, p. 517.

cialism "could not indicate the real solution. It could not explain the real nature of wage-slavery under capitalism, it could not reveal the laws of capitalist development, or show what *social force* is capable of becoming the creator of a new society". *

The utopian socialists saw in the proletariat merely a helpless, suffering mass which could not expect salvation other than from the propertied classes and governments. Owen believed that wealthy people like himself would come forward and donate money for his projects of a new society. He believed that the establishment of communist communities, which he began by founding the New Harmony Community in America, would be a model that humanity would follow. However, as was to be expected, his call to the propertied classes and the government failed to evoke the due response. Owen's socialism, remote from the practical struggle of the workers, was fated to remain utopian.

In his *Condition of the Working-Class in England*, Engels drew the important conclusion that the decisive thing for the English proletariat was to fuse socialism with Chartism. He pointed out that political struggle and the mass revolutionary movement of the workers would result in socialism. On the other hand, for socialism to be transformed from the dream of individual utopians into a real force it should become the aim of the political mass struggle of the working class.

The task of fusing socialism with the working-class movement, of changing it from utopia into a science, from the dream of powerless individuals into the theory of a large and powerful class — this historic task fell to the lot of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, Moscow, 1980, p. 27.

IV. The Partnership with Marx. The Beginning of the Struggle for a Proletarian Party

At the end of August 1844, Engels left Manchester. On the way home he stopped over in Paris and visited Marx. The ten-day stay marked the beginning of the extraordinary friendship and lifelong collaboration of Marx and Engels — an alliance of two great minds that gave the working class a revolutionary theory and laid the foundations of its strategy and tactics. “Old legends contain many moving instances of friendship. The European proletariat may say that its science was created by two scholars and fighters, whose relationship to each other surpasses the most moving stories of the ancients about human friendship.” *

Marx was two and a half years older than Engels. He was born on May 5, 1818, in Trier, in the Rhine Province of Prussia, where Engels, too, was born and raised. His father, Heinrich Marx, a Jew who was converted to Protestantism, was a lawyer by profession. After finishing the Gymnasium in Trier, Marx entered Bonn University, and later the law school of Berlin University. Here he also studied history and especially philosophy. In Berlin, Marx was close to the Young Hegelians (the Bauer brothers and others), with whom Engels also became friendly — after Marx had already left the city.

In 1841, when he graduated, Marx intended becoming a professor in Bonn. But the reactionary policy of the Prussian Government, which had not permitted Ludwig Feuerbach and Bruno Bauer to

* V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 26.

lecture, convinced him that the undertaking would be hopeless. By that time, the bourgeois opposition in the Rhineland had founded the *Rheinische Zeitung* in Cologne. As Engels wrote afterwards, opposition sentiment among the bourgeoisie was so strong at the time that, not having sufficiently capable people at their disposal for newspaper work, they resorted to the services of the extreme philosophical trend, that is, the Young Hegelians. At the outset, Marx worked on the paper as a reporter. On October 15, 1842, he became its editor. Engels contributed articles to it, at first from Berlin and afterwards from Manchester. On his way to Manchester in November 1842, he visited the paper's offices in Cologne. Here his first brief meeting with Marx took place. The meeting was coolish, because Engels was known as an ally of the Free (as the group of the Bauer brothers was called). Marx had refused to publish articles of the Free, full of abstract prattle about philosophy, religion, and communism. True, this was not the case with Engels's contributions, which began arriving in March 1842. Marx asked Engels to be his paper's British correspondent, whereupon Engels contributed a few articles about the English social and political scene.

Under Marx's editorship, the *Rheinische Zeitung* adopted a more definite revolutionary democratic outlook. In January 1843, the Prussian Government issued a decree banning the newspaper as from April 1. Meanwhile, it was subjected to strict censorship. Because of the intention of the shareholders to moderate the tone of the newspaper in the hope of getting the government decree annulled, Marx resigned the editorship on March 17, 1843.

He decided to leave Germany with a view to

starting a journal for revolutionary and socialist propaganda. At the end of October 1843 Marx, who by this time had married Jenny von Westphalen, left for Paris where he and Arnold Ruge launched the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*.

This journal, which came out in February 1844, contained the first two socialist articles written by Marx. Here, in Lenin's words, Marx already appeared as "a revolutionary who advocated 'merciless criticism of everything existing', and in particular 'criticism by weapon', and appealed to the masses and to the *proletariat*".*

In his article, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction", Marx wrote: "The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism by weapons, material force must be overthrown by material force, but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses."**

Marx saw this material force in the class that was being formed, the proletariat. "As philosophy finds its *material* weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its *spiritual* weapons in philosophy,"*** Marx wrote, thus formulating the starting point of scientific communism—the world-historical liberative mission of the proletariat.

The journal also published "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy" by Engels. It whetted Marx's interest in political economy, a subject which he had begun to study while writing articles on the Moselle winegrowers for the *Rheinische Zeitung*. He now made a critical study of bourgeois political economy, particularly the works of Adam Smith and David Ricardo. At the same time Marx studied the history of the French Revolution and utopian socialism. When Engels was still in Manchester, he and Marx began to correspond.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, Moscow, 1980, p. 47.

** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 182.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 187.

Unfortunately, their letters of that period have not come down to us.

When Marx and Engels met again in Paris they were already Communists; they had radically re-examined their philosophical outlook and had advanced from idealism to materialism.

The works of Ludwig Feuerbach played quite an important role in their adoption of materialism. Feuerbach rejected Hegel's "absolute idea", which, according to its author, was the basis of the development of Nature and society. Not the spirit, not the idea, and not thinking gave birth to being, Feuerbach maintained, but, on the contrary, being gave birth to thinking.

Though they thought highly of Feuerbach's philosophy, Marx and Engels criticised his outlook, his half-baked materialism and its passive contemplative nature. Feuerbach did not extend his materialism to social phenomena and remained an idealist in his understanding of the historical process. Marx and Engels went farther, and arrived at the conclusion that the materialist point of view should be consistently applied also in explaining social phenomena and in studying the history of human society. In contrast to Feuerbach who simply scrapped Hegel's idealist dialectics, Marx and Engels reshaped it. It was "standing on its head", since Hegel regarded everything in nature and history as a result of the development of the idea. The task was to lay the foundation for a new materialist dialectics, to fuse materialism and dialectics into an integrated scientific world outlook.

During the ten days that the two men spent together in Paris it turned out that they had reached the same conclusions. Here is what Engels said on this score:

"While I was in Manchester, it was tangibly

brought home to me that the economic facts, which have so far played no role or only a contemptible one in the writing of history, are, at least in the modern world, a decisive historical force; that they form the basis of the origination of the present-day class antagonisms; that these class antagonisms, in the countries where they have become fully developed, thanks to large-scale industry, hence especially in England, are in their turn the basis of the formation of political parties and of party struggles, and thus of all political history. Marx had not only arrived at the same view, but had already, in the *German-French Annuals* * (1844), generalised it to the effect that, speaking generally, it is not the state which conditions and regulates civil society, but civil society which conditions and regulates the state, and, consequently, that policy and its history are to be explained from the economic relations and their development, and not *vice versa*. When I visited Marx in Paris in the summer of 1844, our complete agreement in all theoretical fields became evident and our joint work dates from that time.” **

Marx and Engels started their cooperation by writing a joint work during their brief meeting in Paris. Engels managed to write only a few chapters; in the main this important book was completed by Marx. It was published under the title, *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism. Against Bruno Bauer and Co.*, and was aimed against the Young Hegelians and the “faded, widowed Hegelian philosophy”. In *The Holy Family*, the two friends squared accounts with the section of the German intelligentsia which sought escape from politics in the realm of “pure philosophy” and, like Bruno Bauer, adopted the pose of misunderstood “philosophical leaders”, scorning the “unenlightened” and “restricted” mass, “the mob”.

* *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*.

** K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 3, Moscow, 1983, p. 178.

These anarchist philosophers extended their contempt of the "mob" to the proletariat as well.

Criticising the subjective idealism of Bruno Bauer and his followers, who believed that only chosen individuals made history, Marx and Engels advanced in *The Holy Family* one of the fundamental propositions of historical materialism, namely, that the masses were the real makers of history. The masses, they pointed out, would, on an ever-increasing scale, become conscious agents in the historical process. Lenin characterised this as one of the most profound and most important propositions of historical materialism. *The Holy Family* contains a practically complete system of views on the historical liberative mission of the proletariat. Marx and Engels developed the idea that the working class, by virtue of its objective position in capitalist society, is called upon to effect the revolutionary transformation of the world.

This idea formed the granite foundation on which the integrated edifice of scientific communism was raised. "The chief thing in the doctrine of Marx," wrote Lenin, "is that it brings out the historic role of the proletariat as the builder of socialist society." * With this brilliant discovery, socialism was for the first time put on solid ground and linked with the destiny of the young, rising revolutionary class.

Though in *The Holy Family* Marx and Engels were not yet completely free from the influence of Feuerbach, they laid the foundation for a new, revolutionary materialist world outlook.

Upon returning to Barmen, Engels wrote to Marx that Wuppertal had changed greatly during his absence—considerable industrial development had taken place and opposition sentiment had gripped wider sections of the people.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, Moscow, 1973, p. 582.

The changes which Engels saw had taken place also in other parts of the country. As in England, class contradictions in Germany had become more pronounced. The uprising of the Silesian weavers, the awakening of the proletariat, and its first class conflicts with the bourgeoisie made a strong impact on the country and gave impulse to communist propaganda.

While completing his *Condition of the Working-Class in England*, Engels also engaged in revolutionary activities. He visited a number of towns to establish contact with local socialists, and spoke at meetings organised jointly with other socialists and democrats. At these meetings, he pointed out that capitalism caused the enrichment of a tiny minority and the impoverishment of the vast majority; that the inevitable consequence would be a social revolution, giving rise to a new society, the basic principle of which would be community of interests. Predatory wars of any kind, Engels predicted, would be alien to this society. But in the event of a defensive war, its members had "a *real* Fatherland, a *real* hearth and home to defend" and, consequently, would "fight with an enthusiasm, endurance and bravery before which the mechanically trained soldiers of a modern army must be scattered like chaff".*

Engels wrote in glowing terms to Marx about these meetings; he was thrilled at the success of communist propaganda and also at the opportunity of being able to stand up "in front of real, live people" and "hold forth to them directly and straightforwardly" instead of "engaging in this devilishly abstract quillpushing with an abstract audience in one's 'mind's eye'".**

But his joy at his direct association with the masses was clouded by painful relations in the fam-

*Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 4, p. 250.

** *Ibid.*, Vol. 38,
Moscow, 1982, p. 23.

ily. He described his feelings in a letter to Marx dated March 17, 1845: "The business of the meetings and the 'dissolute conduct' of several of our local communists, with whom I, of course, consort, have again aroused all my old man's religious fanaticism, which has been further exacerbated by my declared intention of giving up the huckstering business for good and all — while my public appearance as a communist has also fostered in him bourgeois fanaticism of truly splendid proportions... If I get a letter it's sniffed all over before it reaches me. As they're all known to be communist letters they evoke such piously doleful expressions every time that it's enough to drive one out of one's mind. If I go out — the same expression. If I sit in my room and work — communism, of course, as they know — the same expression. I can't eat, drink, sleep, let out a fart, without being confronted by this same accursed lamb-of-God expression. Whether I go out or stay at home, remain silent or speak, read or write, whether I laugh or whether I don't — do what I will, my old man immediately assumes this lamentable grimace." *

Finally, in the spring of 1845, unable to lead "a real dog's life"*** any longer under the paternal roof, Engels left Barmen for Brussels, whither Marx had been deported from Paris a short time before in connection with the Prussian Government's insistence that the French authorities should close the German-language *Vorwärts!*.

Recalling his meeting with Marx in Brussels, Engels wrote afterwards: "When, in the spring of 1845, we met again in Brussels, Marx had already fully developed his materialist theory of history in its main features ... and we now applied ourselves to the detailed elaboration of the newly-won outlook in the most varied directions."****

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, pp. 28-29.

** *Ibid.*, p. 28.

*** K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 178.

Engels described the famous *Theses on Feuerbach*, which Marx wrote in the spring of 1845, as containing "the brilliant germ of the new world outlook".* The main idea in the *Theses* was centred on the role of revolutionary practice in transforming the world. In the final, eleventh, thesis, Marx defined the basic distinction of his new world outlook not only from the views of Feuerbach, but also from all preceding philosophy: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it."**

Before launching out on a new joint study, Marx and Engels went on a six-week visit to Britain, where they intended to examine economic literature unavailable in Brussels. Besides, Marx wanted a closer acquaintanceship with the British working-class movement. They spent most of their time in Manchester, at the old Chetham's Library. Then they went to London, where they met Harney and other left Chartist, and members of the League of the Just, a secret organisation of German communist workers—compositor Karl Schapper, shoemaker Heinrich Bauer and watch-maker Joseph Moll, whom Engels had first met in 1843. This time, Engels helped establish relations between the League of the Just and the left Chartists. A joint meeting of the two organisations and of democrats of different nationalities resident in London, passed a decision, with Marx's and Engels's active intervention, to set up an international society of democrats. The inaugural meeting of the society, which was named Fraternal Democrats, took place after Marx and Engels had left. Engels wrote an article about the event, entitled "The Festival of Nations in London", spelling out the idea of proletarian internationalism in print for the first time.

* *Ibid.* p. 336.

** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Moscow, 1976, p. 8.

"The proletarians in all countries," he wrote, "have one and the same interest, one and the same enemy, and one and the same struggle. The great mass of proletarians are, by their very nature, free from national prejudices.... Only the proletarians can destroy nationality, only the awakening proletariat can bring about fraternisation between the different nations."*

The two men set forth the basic principles of their new world outlook in a big work which they called *The German Ideology*, which, however, was not fated to see the light of day for many years. No publisher could be found for it.** "We abandoned the manuscript to the gnawing criticism of the mice all the more willingly," wrote Marx, "since we had achieved our main purpose—self-clarification."***

In *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels, denouncing the views of the Young Hegelians (Bruno Bauer and Stirner), criticised Hegel's philosophy and idealist philosophy in general. While paying tribute to Feuerbach, they disclosed the shortcomings of his metaphysical, restricted, passive contemplative materialism. *The German Ideology* also exposed petty-bourgeois "true socialism", the champions of which (Karl Grün and others) opposed the class struggle and engaged in sentimental petty-bourgeois sermons about universal love, brotherhood, justice, etc. The "True Socialists" also came out against participation in the struggle for democracy. This was most harmful in the conditions of pre-revolutionary Germany.

The German Ideology outlined the basic propositions of historical materialism—the great discovery made by Marx, which signified a radical change in philosophy and a veritable revolution in

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1976, p. 6.

** The full text of *The German Ideology* was first published in the Soviet Union in 1932 in the German language. A Russian translation followed in 1933.

*** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, Moscow, 1987, p. 264.

the entire understanding of world history. This discovery for the first time transformed history into a genuine science. Before this the notion prevailed that the reason for all changes in history should be sought in the changes in ideas, in philosophical, religious and political views. But where are we to look for the source of various ideas, of what impelled men to change their views—to this no one could find the answer. Marx showed that the historical process is based on the material life of society, on the mode of production. Consequently, the main reasons for changes in history, for social transformations, must be sought not in abstract ideas, theories or political views, but in the material life of society, which these ideas, theories and political views reflected.

The German Ideology set forth for the first time the idea of the objective, law-governed, historically conditioned replacement of socio-economic systems. Marx and Engels saw the key to understanding historical development in the dialectics of the productive forces and the relations of production (“forms of intercourse”, as they called them at the time). As the productive forces develop, they enter into a contradiction with the existing relations of production. This contradiction is resolved by social revolution, as a result of which one social system gives way to another; for example, feudalism is replaced by capitalism. Transition from one socio-economic system to another does not take place automatically, without people. The irreconcilable inner contradictions common to every class society find expression in class struggle which leads to revolution. In contrast to the previous theories of history which attributed a creative role only to outstanding personalities, Marx and Engels showed that the people were the real makers of history,

that the class struggle was the motive force of history.

This work also outlined a number of fundamental propositions of Marxist political economy. From the analysis of the laws of the development of capitalism, Marx and Engels deduced the inevitable downfall of capitalist society, and theoretically substantiated the necessity for a socialist revolution. In order to destroy capitalist society, they wrote, the proletariat, like any class aspiring to rule, must first win political power. This proposition contained the germ of the Marxist teaching on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Some of the contours of the future communist society can also be found in *The German Ideology*. Under communism public property will reign supreme. The antithesis between town and country, and between mental and manual labour, will vanish, and conditions will be created for the all-round development of the individual. Marx and Engels refuted the contention that under communism the individual becomes the slave of society. They proved that "only within the community has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; hence personal freedom becomes possible only within the community".*

In contrast to the utopian socialists, Marx and Engels considered communism not a fantastic dream about a beautiful future, but an objectively necessary, historically conditioned aim, carried into effect by practical revolutionary means.

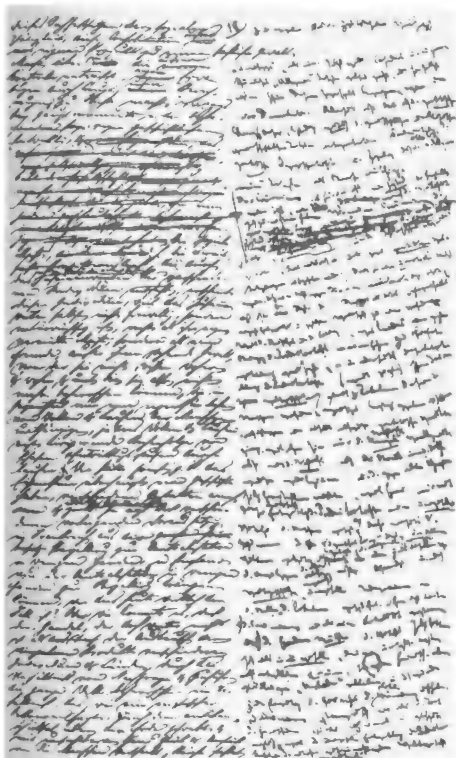
The German Ideology was a most important phase in the shaping of the theoretical and philosophical foundation of scientific communism—dialectical and historical materialism.

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 5, p. 78.

Unlike Feuerbach's philosophy, Marx and Engels stressed, their doctrine was of an active revolutionary nature. But they did not confine themselves to a mere scientific exposition of their views. They saw in their theory a weapon for the revolutionary remaking of the world, and stressed the indissolu-

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The Partnership with Marx. The Beginning of the Struggle for a Proletarian Party



A page from the manuscript of *The German Ideology* by Marx and Engels. Left: Engels's text, right: Marx's text

ble unity of theory and revolutionary practice, launching a struggle to fuse socialism with the working-class movement and to establish a workers' party.

When they took the first steps in this direction, they already had fairly wide contacts with democratic intellectuals and also with the organised proletariat in various countries.

At that time a variety of utopian trends existed in the socialist movement. The German workers and artisans, living in Paris, for instance, had a secret organisation that espoused the ideas of French utopian communism. The so-called League of the Just, consisting chiefly of artisans, maintained close ties with the Society of the Seasons led by the French revolutionary Auguste Blanqui. After an unsuccessful uprising of Blanqui's followers in 1839, several members of the League of the Just had been arrested and deported from France. A few branches of the League of the Just were founded in London, and the German Workers' Educational Society organised in London in 1840 was under their influence. There were League branches also in Paris, Switzerland and Germany. London became the centre of the movement and the League became international in nature. In addition to Germans, it included Scandinavians, Dutch, Hungarians, Czechs, and others.

The communist ideas of Wilhelm Weitling, a German tailor, had a strong influence on the League of the Just. In contrast to the peaceful utopian socialism of Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen, Weitling advocated armed struggle and social revolution. His communism, however, was still utopian—he lacked a correct idea of the future society, of the methods of achieving it, and of the social force which would carry out the overturn.

Despite the utopian nature of Weitling's communism and its religious Christian overtones, it played no small role in the history of the German workers' movement "as the first independent theoretical movement of the German proletariat".*

Having undertaken to organise the proletarian party, Marx and Engels were eager to establish contact with the branches of the League of the Just, and to help its members overcome their utopian views.

Together with their friends and confederates, Marx and Engels set about establishing an organisational centre in Brussels. They were joined by Wilhelm Wolff, son of a serf, teacher, and staunch defender of the Silesian weavers, the proletarian poet Georg Weerth, Edgar von Westphalen, Marx's brother-in-law and schoolmate, Ferdinand Wolff and Sebastian Seiler, both of them journalists, Joseph Weydemeyer, a former lieutenant in the Prussian army, the Belgian Philippe Gigot, and other revolutionaries.

The Brussels Communist Correspondence Committee set up in January 1846 maintained contacts with socialist and workers' movements in different countries.

By the middle of 1846, the Committee had established ties with the League of the Just and the German Workers' Educational Society in London, the English Chartists, the German branches of the League of the Just in Paris, and communist groups in Germany (Wuppertal, Cologne, Westphalia, Silesia, North Germany, etc.). The task was to unite the scattered communist groups of German workers, to establish closer contacts with the organisations of the English and French proletariat, and with the workers of other countries, and — what was especially important — to reach a consensus

* K. Marx and
F. Engels, *Selected
Works*, Vol. 3, p. 176.

on what the fundamentals of the communist movement were to be.

"At the beginning of the first period," Lenin wrote, "Marx's doctrine by no means dominated. It was only one of the very numerous groups or trends of socialism."*

One of the obstacles hindering the new revolutionary world outlook from making its way to the workers was Weitling's sectarian, vulgarly egalitarian communism which rejected the necessity of political struggle. Having quarrelled with members of the League of the Just in London, Weitling had taken up residence in Brussels. Marx and Engels exerted much effort in trying to win this talented, self-taught man to their side. He, however, obstinately clung to his views and imagined himself a great man persecuted by secret enemies and envious rivals. At a meeting of the Brussels Committee on March 30, 1846, Marx and Engels had no choice but to denounce Weitling's communism. Shortly, the Committee informed all communist organisations with which it had contacts that it had broken off relations with Weitling once and for all.

In a number of circulars Marx and Engels criticised the mishmash of utopian socialism and German philosophy which was then the doctrine of the League of the Just. Only one of these circulars has come down to us—the one in which Marx and Engels polemised against Hermann Kriege, editor of the *Volks-Tribun* published in New York, a typical devotee and advocate of "true socialism". In this circular, Marx and Engels showed the need for a resolute break with petty-bourgeois elements like Kriege, who were demoralising the communist movement. They ridiculed the philanthropic ravings about universal love advocated by Kriege in

* V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, Moscow, 1973, p. 582.

the guise of “communism”, and his attempts to describe the struggle for an agrarian reform in the USA, which was petty-bourgeois in character, as a communist movement.

Petty-bourgeois influence was still very strong in various organisations of the League, especially in Paris. In view of this, in August 1846, the Brussels Committee sent Engels to Paris. Engels availed himself of the opportunity to examine the political scene in France in contributions to *The Northern Star*. In letters to Marx and the Brussels Communist Correspondence Committee, Engels referred negatively to the socialist schools of the Fourierists and Saint-Simonists, who had turned out to be unworthy of their teachers. His references to Étienne Cabet, on the other hand, whom he described as an outstanding representative of French utopian socialism, were complimentary. Engels also visited Marx’s friend, the German poet Heinrich Heine, who was then bed-ridden and of whom he spoke with compassion and sympathy. In a series of letters to the Brussels Committee and to Marx, Engels described the situation in the Paris communities of the League of the Just. It turned out that they were in “boundless confusion”. They included Weitling’s adherents and supporters of “true socialism” like Karl Grün, who stuffed the heads of his audiences with phrases about universal love, humanity, and also with the ideas of the French petty-bourgeois reformer, Proudhon, whose views Marx shortly afterwards criticised in his *Poverty of Philosophy* (1847). Grün propagated the idea of organising workers’ societies which would, in the Proudhon spirit, open workshops with money donated by the workers themselves—with the result that the factory owners would be left without labour. Informing Marx about this fantastic plan “to

buy up the whole of France, no more no less, and later, perhaps, the rest of the world as well" on workers' savings, Engels wrote: "It is disgraceful that one should still have to pit oneself against such barbaric nonsense. But one must be patient, and I shall not let the fellows go until I have driven Grün from the field and have swept the cobwebs from their brains." *

At one meeting Engels asked for a vote on the question: is this a meeting of communists? — and defined the aims of communists as follows: "1) to ensure that the interests of the proletariat prevail, as opposed to those of the bourgeoisie; 2) to do so by abolishing private property and replacing same with community of goods; 3) to recognise no means of attaining these aims other than democratic revolution by force." **

As a result of the ensuing stormy debate, the great majority expressed themselves for Engels's definition; the meeting declared itself communist and announced its break with Proudhonism and "true socialism".

Commenting on Engels's struggle for the principles of communism, Lenin wrote in 1913: "Thus the foundations of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany were laid in Paris sixty-seven years ago." ***

Similar changes occurred in other branches of the League of the Just. As a result, Schapper, Heinrich Bauer and Moll, who had headed the League of the Just from November 1846, inclined more and more to the views propagated by Marx and Engels.

The logical outcome of the drive for a proletarian party and its revolutionary outlook was that in January 1847 the London Committee of the League of the Just instructed Joseph Moll to ap-

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 38, p. 71.

** *Ibid.*, p. 82.

*** V. I. Lenin,
Collected Works,
Vol. 19, p. 558.

proach Marx in Brussels and afterwards Engels in Paris with the proposal that they should officially join the League. Moll said that he and his comrades had become convinced of the correctness of the views of Marx and Engels, and requested them to set them forth in a document which would be put up for discussion as the League's official programme at its congress in London. He also asked them to help reorganise the League. Marx and Engels consented.

The Congress of the League was held in London from June 2 to 9, 1847. Financial difficulties prevented Marx from attending; the Paris communities were represented by Engels, while Wilhelm Wolff represented Brussels.


Engels exercised a very great influence on the course of the congress, which was in effect the inaugural congress of a new organisation.

The congress changed the name of the League of the Just to Communist League. Instead of the old abstractly humanistic motto, "All men are brothers", a new slogan, suggested by Marx and Engels, was proclaimed: "Working men of all countries, unite!" This slogan, which expresses the principles of proletarian internationalism, became the militant call of the workers of all countries in their struggle against capitalist slavery.

The draft rules adopted by the congress were largely relieved of the former elements of sectarianism and conspiracy. Sent to the communities for discussion, they were subject to final endorsement at the Second Congress of the Communist League.

The congress also discussed the League's programme. The discussion resulted in the drafting of a document, styled as a catechism — in the form of questions and answers — and entitled a Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith. Written in En-





gels's hand, the document was signed by the chairman of the congress Schill (the cover name of Karl Schapper in the League) and the congress secretary Heide (the cover name of Wilhelm Wolff in the League). A considerable part of the text was reproduced almost verbatim in Engels's "Principles of Communism", written some time later. But another part, consisting of the first six questions and answers, could not have belonged to Engels's hand, for it betrayed the not yet completely overcome influence of utopian views. The document was evidently the result of a compromise. This is also intimated in a circular letter of the congress to members of the League, which said the congress considered haste in so important a matter as the programme impermissible, and therefore regarded the document not as a final draft but a tentative sketch sent to the communities for serious and careful discussion, whereupon they should send in their suggestions and amendments. Not until then would the document be laid before the Second Congress of the League.

Owing to the disruptive tactics of the Paris community of Weitling's followers, it was expelled from the League, and with it, in effect, also Weitling himself.

After the congress a community of the Communist League was formed in Brussels, with Marx as its chairman and also as chairman of the district committee. Moreover, Marx and Engels organised the German Workers' Society in Brussels, which was guided by the local community of the Communist League. They succeeded in taking actual control of the *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung*, a newspaper founded by a petty-bourgeois journalist, Adalbert von Bornstedt. In their articles, Marx and Engels pointed to the approaching revolution in

a number of European countries and outlined the strategy and tactics which the proletariat should adopt. They opposed the flirting of the feudal reactionary parties with the proletariat and also the attempts of the bourgeoisie to use the workers as a docile tool in the struggle against the despotic monarchy. Calling upon the workers actively to join in the coming revolutionary battles, they stressed that the bourgeois revolution was not the final aim of the struggle of the proletariat and that after the triumph of this revolution the working class should carry on the struggle for socialist revolution. This idea was elaborated upon in the theory of continuous revolution.

Engels called for the unity of all democratic forces in the battle against absolutism and feudalism. In so doing, he ascribed the leading role to the proletariat. "The industrial proletariat of the towns," he wrote, "has become the vanguard of all modern democracy; the urban petty bourgeoisie and still more the peasants depend on its initiative completely." *

In addition to writing for the *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung*, Engels also contributed to the Chartist *Northern Star* and the French democratic newspaper *La Réforme*.

Along with organising the Brussels community of the Communist League and the German Workers' Society, Marx and Engels also took part in building the broader Democratic Association, through which they formed a kind of alliance with the Brussels democrats and also with democratic exiles from other countries. Marx and Engels believed that the proletariat should support every progressive and democratic movement.

In mid-October 1847, Engels again set out for Paris. Here he was elected to the District Com-

■ Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 6, p. 295.

mittee of the Communist League. Much work had to be done in preparation for the Second Congress of the Communist League at which the programme would be discussed.

The draft of the Communist Confession of Faith submitted to the Paris communities contained changes made by Moses Hess. But Engels subjected it to such devastating criticism that he was instructed to draw up a new draft.

In his letter to Marx of November 23-24, 1847, Engels suggested that they should meet in the Belgian town of Ostend two days before the congress so as to talk things over.

"This congress," Engels wrote, "must be a decisive one, *as this time we shall have it all our own way....* Give a little thought to the Confession of Faith. I think we would do best to abandon the catechetical form and call the thing Communist *Manifesto*. Since a certain amount of history has to be narrated in it, the form hitherto adopted is quite unsuitable. I shall be bringing with me the one from here, which I did; it is in simple narrative form, but wretchedly worded, in a tearing hurry. I start off by asking: What is communism? and then straight on to the proletariat -- the history of its origins, how it differs from earlier workers, development of the antithesis between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, crises, conclusions. In between, all kinds of secondary matter and, finally, the communists' party policy, in so far as it should be made public. The one here has not yet been submitted in its entirety for endorsement but, save for a few quite minor points, I think I can get it through in such a form that at least there is nothing in it which conflicts with our views." *

In fact Engels sketched the first draft of the *Communist Manifesto* which became known as the

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 38, pp. 146, 149.

"Principles of Communism". Though also written in the catechetical form, the "Principles" was four times the size of the Communist Confession of Faith and—what is important—it fully reflected Engels's views.

The "Principles of Communism" deals with some questions which are not touched upon in the *Manifesto*. Among them is the question: "Will it be possible to bring about the abolition of private property by peaceful methods?" Engels answers it as follows: "It is to be desired that this could happen, and Communists certainly would be the last to resist it.... But they also see that the development of the proletariat is in nearly every civilised country forcibly suppressed, and that thus the opponents of the Communists are working with all their might towards a revolution. Should the proletariat in the end be goaded into a revolution, we Communists will then defend the cause of the proletarians by deed just as well as we do now by word."*

Another point not dealt with in the *Manifesto* concerned the possibility of the victory of the socialist revolution in one country. Basing himself on the conditions of pre-monopoly capitalism, Engels reached the conclusion that the socialist revolution would take place simultaneously in all civilised countries, i. e. at least in England, America, France and Germany. Developing Marxism in the new historical setting, Lenin proceeded from the law he had discovered of the extremely uneven, spasmodic economic and political development of capitalism in the epoch of imperialism, and declared that in the conditions of imperialism the victory of socialism was possible at first in several countries or even in one country taken singly, and that the simultaneous victory of the socialist revolution in all countries or in the majority of countries was impossible.

* *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, pp. 349-50.

The Second Congress of the Communist League met in London from November 29 to December 8, 1847. Engels was present as delegate from the Paris communities and Marx as delegate from the Brussels community.

The Congress endorsed the draft rules, with a few amendments. The most important amendment was submitted by Marx and Engels, who gave the classic wording of the first, programmatic, article of the rules: "The aim of the League is the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the rule of the proletariat, the abolition of the old bourgeois society which rests on the antagonism of classes, and the foundation of a new society without classes and without private property."* During the discussion of the rules, thanks to the efforts of Marx and Engels the League put an end to conspiratorial tactics and openly proclaimed its principles.

The League's programme was the main item on the congress agenda. After a long debate the ideas of scientific communism advocated by Marx and Engels triumphed. The new basic principles were unanimously adopted and Marx and Engels were commissioned to draw up the Manifesto.

Marx and Engels took advantage of their stay in London to extend their contacts with communist workers and also with democrats of different countries. They attended an international democratic meeting devoted to the anniversary of the 1830 insurrection in Poland. In their speeches at this meeting they formulated the basic policy of the proletariat on the national question. Engels, for instance, advanced the thesis which later became the guiding principle for the proletariat on the national question: "A nation cannot become free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations."*

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 6, p. 633.

** *Ibid.*, p. 389.

In the same speech, Engels substantiated the principle of proletarian internationalism and the motto of the Communist League. He said: "Because the condition of the workers of all countries is the same, because their interests are the same, their enemies the same, they must also fight together, they must oppose the brotherhood of the bourgeoisie of all nations with a brotherhood of the workers of all nations." *

In mid-December 1847, the friends left London for Brussels. After a short stay in the Belgian capital, Engels set out once more for Paris, while Marx busied himself with the final editing of the Communist League programme.

The pamphlet *Manifesto of the Communist Party* came off the press in London in February 1848. This first programme of scientific communism was destined to become, as Engels wrote, "the most widely circulated, the most international product of all socialist literature, the common programme of many millions of workers of all countries, from Siberia to California".**

It contained the first concise and precise outline of the revolutionary theory of the proletariat—scientific communism, and its three component parts. "With the clarity and brilliance of genius," wrote Lenin, "this work outlines a new world-conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life; dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of a new, communist society."***

The *Manifesto* is a scientific substantiation of the historical inevitability of the downfall of capitalism and its replacement—as a result of prole-

* *Ibid.*, p. 390.

** K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1983, p. 103.

*** V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, Moscow, 1980, p. 48.

tarian revolution and the establishment of the political rule of the proletariat — by a new, classless society.

Marx and Engels showed in the *Manifesto* that all human history (after the disintegration of primitive communities) was a history of class struggle between exploiters and exploited, between ruling and oppressed classes. Capitalist society, which replaced feudalism, merely set up new classes in place of the old, and sharpened and aggravated class contradictions. In contrast to the bourgeois ideologues who preached the theory of the “supra-class” nature of the state, they showed in the *Manifesto* that the state in capitalist society was simply “a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie”.*

Marx and Engels showed further that private ownership of the means of production became a fetter on the development of the productive forces. The fundamental contradiction of capitalism — the social nature of production and the private capitalist mode of appropriating the result of production — became more and more aggravated. The contradictions of capitalism culminated in crises which periodically rock capitalist society as a result of the anarchy of production characteristic of capitalism. The bourgeoisie endeavoured to overcome the crises by destroying the products made by the working people, by capturing new markets and by predatory wars, which caused incalculable suffering to mankind. But by means of all these measures, says the *Manifesto*, the bourgeoisie merely paved the way to even more devastating crises in the future. Defending private ownership of the means of production, the bourgeoisie became transformed from a progressive class into a class that was increasingly reactionary, a brake

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 6, p. 486.

on humanity's march to a higher system— 73
communism.

The *Manifesto* showed the working people the way to get rid of the terrible poverty and suffering which capitalism brought in its train: socialist revolution and the conquest of political power by the proletariat.

In the course of its development capitalism created the conditions for the future communist society. It also created the proletariat, the class destined to be the grave-digger of capitalism and builder of the new society. The proletariat, a consistently revolutionary class, could not liberate itself without at the same time liberating the whole of society from all exploitation and oppression.

The bourgeoisie, said the *Manifesto*, "produces, above all, its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable." *

The great idea about the world-historical mission of the proletariat was thus further substantiated and developed in the *Manifesto*.

The *Manifesto* contained the thesis about the leading role of the Communist Party as the condition for the successful struggle and victory of the proletariat. The Communists, Marx and Engels explained, were the most resolute, advanced section of the working class; they had the advantage over the rest of the workers in being equipped with revolutionary theory which enabled them to understand the conditions, the line of march, and the ultimate results of the proletarian movement.

The Communists advocate the common interests of the workers irrespective of nationality. They are champions of consistent proletarian internationalism. At all stages of the working-class struggle, the Communists take as their starting point the common, vital interests of the proletariat, the task of

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* *Ibid.*, p. 496.

doing away with all oppression and all exploitation. These outlines of the teaching on the proletarian party were further developed in the later works of Marx and Engels, and in their practical revolutionary activity.

Countering the slanders and lies spread by the bourgeoisie concerning the views and designs of the Communists, Marx and Engels formulated in the *Manifesto* the aims of the proletarian party: overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie and the conquest of political power by the proletariat.

"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i. e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible." *

This thesis expresses one of the most brilliant ideas of Marxism on the question of the state. "*The state, i. e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class— this is the dictatorship of the proletariat,*" wrote Lenin.**

The doctrine on the dictatorship of the proletariat is the main point of Marxism.

The *Manifesto* contains a profound theoretical substantiation of the principle of proletarian internationalism proclaimed by Marx and Engels. The rule of the proletariat, they pointed out, would put an end to national oppression and forever rid mankind of predatory wars.

"In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to," they wrote, "the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to.

"In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end." ***

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 504.

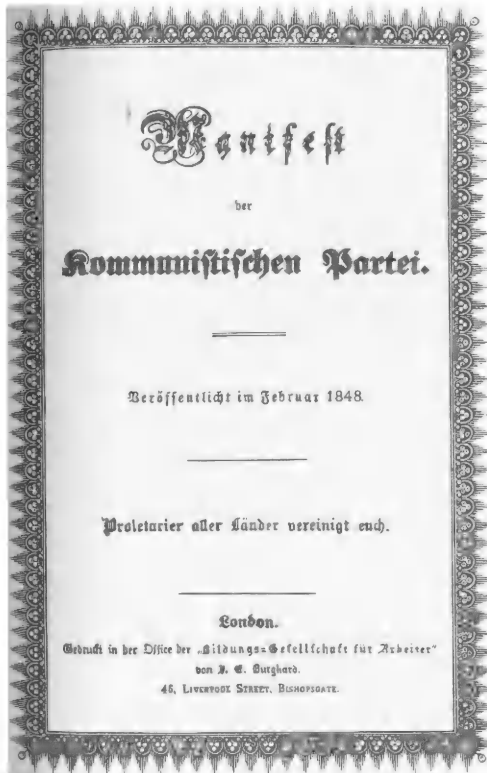
** V. I. Lenin, *Marxism on the State*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1984, p. 37.

*** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 503.

The fact that in the *Manifesto* they traced the general contours of the future communist society and demonstrated the immeasurable superiority of the social system that would be established by the proletariat, testifies to the scientific prevision of the founders of Marxism that in communist society

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Cover of the first edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*

there would be no obstacles of any kind and, consequently, no limit to the development of the productive forces. In contrast to capitalist society where prevails the principle: "He who labours does not appropriate, while he who appropriates does not labour," in communist society labour will be a means of enriching, of easing the life of the working people.

"In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms," the *Manifesto* said, "we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." *

As Engels noted, the above passage expressed the main idea of the next, communist era in the history of humanity.**

In a separate section of the *Manifesto*, Marx and Engels subjected to detailed criticism the various socialist trends of the day which hindered the spread of the ideas of scientific communism among the proletariat, and the establishment of a proletarian party. Explaining the incorrectness and harmfulness of these trends, they disclosed their class roots. The analysis of socialist and communist literature in the *Manifesto* showed that scientific communism -- the revolutionary theory of the proletariat -- was the sole socialist doctrine with a future.

The *Manifesto* also outlined the tactics of the proletarian party, the basic principle of which was formulated as follows: "The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."*** This means that in all phases of the struggle of the proletariat, the Communists

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 506.

** Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 39, S. 194.

*** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 518.

should never lose sight of the vital task of the working class — the abolition of wage slavery. 77

The Communists support every progressive, revolutionary movement aimed against the reactionary social and political system. Touching on the attitude of the Communists to various opposition parties in different countries, Marx and Engels dwelt particularly on Germany where conditions were ripe for a bourgeois-democratic revolution. During this phase, the German proletariat would fight together with the bourgeoisie since the latter was battling against absolutism and feudalism. At the same time, the Communist Party should give the workers a clear understanding of the conflicting interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, since with the advent to power of the bourgeoisie the proletariat would have to fight the bourgeoisie.

The *Communist Manifesto* ends with a proud and challenging call for proletarian revolution: "Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

"Working Men of All Countries, Unite!" *

The *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, the immortal work of Marx and Engels, is permeated with lofty inspiration and revolutionary ardour. It is not merely a generalisation of all the preceding creative efforts of the two men. Its appearance was a gigantic step forward in elaborating scientific communism, Marxism.

Engels repeatedly stressed that the genuinely scientific revolutionary theory of the proletariat — one of the greatest discoveries of the nineteenth century — was above all the work of Marx and, for this reason, justly bears his name. Thus, almost forty years later, in his *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, Engels wrote

The Partnership with Marx. The Beginning of the Struggle for a Proletarian Party

* *Ibid.*, p. 519.

as follows of Marx's role and his own part in elaborating scientific communism:

"I cannot deny that both before and during my forty years' collaboration with Marx I had a certain independent share in laying the foundations of the theory, and more particularly in its elaboration. But the greater part of its leading basic principles, especially in the realm of economics and history, and, above all, their final trenchant formulation, belong to Marx. What I contributed — at any rate with the exception of my work in a few special fields — Marx could very well have done without me. What Marx accomplished I would not have achieved. Marx stood higher, saw further, and took a wider and quicker view than all the rest of us. Marx was a genius; we others were at best talented. Without him the theory would not be by far what it is today. It therefore rightly bears his name." *

The emergence of scientific communism was not the accidental discovery of a brilliant mind. Marx's doctrine could not have appeared without the emergence of the new revolutionary class — the proletariat, without the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie surging to the forefront in the more developed countries of Europe. Scientific communism arose as an international doctrine, as a result of a theoretical generalisation of the class struggle and first of all the experience of the working-class movement in different countries.

The theoretical wellsprings of Marxism are the doctrines of great men in philosophy, political economy, and socialism. Marx adapted all valuable elements in the theories advanced by his predecessors, created an integrated world outlook and supplied answers to questions which human

* K. Marx and
F. Engels, *Selected
Works*, Vol. 3, p. 361.

thought had already posed. Lenin wrote: "He reconsidered, subjected to criticism, and verified on the working-class movement everything that human thinking had created, and therefrom formulated conclusions which people hemmed in by bourgeois limitations or bound by bourgeois prejudices could not draw." *

Being the lawful successor to all that was best, all that had been created by scientific thought, Marx's doctrine signified a radical turn, a genuine revolution in philosophy, in political economy and in socialist thought.

In contrast to previous thinkers who had had no contact with the masses, Marx and Engels, in addition to being brilliant scientists, were outstanding revolutionaries and leaders of the proletariat. The rise of Marxism paved the way to the merging of socialism with the working-class movement.

Marxism received its baptism of fire in the revolutionary events of 1848 and 1849.

V. Engels in the Revolution of 1848-49

The appearance of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* coincided with big revolutionary events in Europe.

In January 1848, an uprising broke out in Sicily. On February 22-24, the Paris workers supported by the petty bourgeoisie won a heroic barricade struggle against the troops of Louis Philippe, the Bankers' King, and compelled the provisional government to proclaim a republic. At the end of February and the beginning of March revolution spread to Western and Southern Germany (Baden, Württemberg, Bavaria and Saxony). Simultaneously, a revolutionary national liberation movement began in Hungary, then part of multinational Austria, "prison of the peoples". A revolutionary outburst took place in Vienna on March 13, and a few days later, on March 18, in Berlin. By March 22, Austrian troops had been driven out of Milan. And a new wave of the Chartist movement began in England during March and April. These were the first major revolutionary battles of 1848, which bourgeois historians described as the "mad year".

The objectives of the revolutionary battles which took place in a number of countries in Western Europe were, in effect, objectives of the bourgeois-democratic revolution: overthrow of the absolute monarchies, abolition of feudal landownership, liberation from alien oppression, and the creation of unified democratic national states. Marx and En-

gels believed then that, given favourable progress of the class struggle, the bourgeois-democratic revolutions in a number of European countries could be a direct prelude to proletarian revolution.

Marx and Engels, who saw revolutions as a great motive force, the locomotive of history, hailed the revolutionary battles. They saw their main task in coming to the aid of the popular masses, and imparting organisation and direction to their spontaneous actions.

"In the activities of Marx and Engels themselves," wrote Lenin, "the period of their participation in the mass revolutionary struggle of 1848-49 stands out as the central point."*

On the eve of the revolution in France, Engels, who had been deported from Paris for his revolutionary activity among the workers, set out for Brussels. However, his stay in the Belgian capital was short-lived. When the February revolution broke out in France, he and Marx decided to make for Paris, the centre of the revolutionary struggle. The Belgian government accelerated their departure. On March 3, Marx was ordered out of the country in 24 hours; in the early hours of March 4, he and his wife were arrested but several hours later released. Marx immediately left for Paris and was soon joined there by his family. Engels remained in Brussels for a couple of weeks. He organised a campaign against Marx's deportation and wound up his affairs, since Marx had to leave Brussels without taking even the necessary belongings.

By the time Engels arrived in the French capital, Marx was already immersed in revolutionary work. Acting on powers vested in him by the London Central Authority of the Communist League, Marx organised a new Central Authority, which elected him chairman, Schapper secretary, and En-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 37.

gels, Wilhelm Wolff, Moll, Heinrich Bauer and Wallau members.

The first job facing the new committee was to settle the question of the German workers and political refugees who lived in Paris and were anxious to return home and participate in revolutionary work. "At that time the craze for revolutionary legions, prevailed in Paris. Spaniards, Italians, Belgians, Dutch, Poles and Germans flocked together in crowds to liberate their respective fatherlands."*

In Paris, the German Democratic Society headed by Börnstedt, a journalist, and Herwegh, a poet, organised an armed German Legion with a view to invading Germany and starting a revolution there. Marx and Engels resolutely opposed this "playing at revolution".

As a counterweight to this reckless idea, which was now utterly senseless in view of the outbreak of revolution in Germany, Marx and Engels, who had organised a German Workers' Club in the French capital, advanced their own plan, the only feasible one, for the return to Germany of German refugees singly. By the beginning of April, something like 400 people, most of them members of the Communist League, returned to Germany in this way. The events proved that Marx and Engels were right: at the border, the Herwegh Legion walked into a trap prepared for it by the French and Prussian governments, while members of the Communist League who travelled to Germany singly took their place in the vanguard of the revolutionary movement and demonstrated, as Engels subsequently wrote, that "the League had been an excellent school for revolutionary activity".**

Marx and Engels suited their strategy and tactics to the objective historical tasks which the German revolution was called upon to achieve and to the

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p.184.

** *Ibid.*, p. 185.

real relationship of class forces in the country.

The main task of the 1848 revolution in Germany was to overcome the country's political fragmentation and economic backwardness. Feudal landlords and a greedy, narrow-minded bureaucracy held sway in Germany at the time, while culture stagnated. The still existing feudal relations held back the development of the country along capitalist lines.

Germany could be united in one of two ways—the revolutionary way which would result in a single democratic German republic, or the counter-revolutionary way which would unite Germany “from above” round one of the strongest kingdoms, Prussia or Austria.

At this critical juncture in Germany's history, with the country's future at stake, Marx and Engels, with the consistency of proletarian revolutionaries, fought for a unified democratic Germany.

At the end of March they drafted a document of the utmost importance -- “Demands of the Communist Party in Germany” -- in which they formulated the proletariat's political platform in the revolution. The list of demands led off with the principal demand of the Communists in the German bourgeois-democratic revolution — a single and indivisible German republic. Marx and Engels regarded the establishment of a single democratic republic as a measure that would facilitate the further struggle of the proletariat for socialism. This was followed by universal suffrage for men who have reached the age of 21, universal arming of the people, legal services free of charge, abolition without compensation of all feudal obligations and dues which weighed heavily on the peasants, confiscation of princely and other feudal estates, replacement of all private banks by a state bank, state



ownership of quarries and mines and of all means of transport and communications, complete separation of Church from State, introduction of steeply graduated taxes, the inauguration of national workshops, universal and free education.

Since Marx and Engels regarded the ongoing revolution as the prologue to proletarian revolution, they included among the above a number of measures which, as stated in the *Communist Manifesto*, "in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves" and lead to a revolution in the entire mode of production.*

"Demands of the Communist Party in Germany", which were signed by the members of the Central Committee of the Communist League, were printed as a separate leaflet and distributed, together with the *Communist Manifesto*, among workers returning to Germany. At the same time, Marx and Engels instructed League members to form communities and workers' organisations in Germany.

Upon completing this preliminary work, Marx and Engels, eager to return to Germany then in the grip of revolution, left Paris for Cologne at the beginning of April, stopping over in Mainz for several days.

Wallau, a member of the Communist League's Central Authority, had made an attempt there, on Marx's request, to unite all workers' societies that happened to spring up in Germany with the object of turning them into political mass organisations. The communities of the Communist League were to become their nucleus; the attempt failed owing to the fragmentation of Germany and the immaturity of its working class.

By the time Marx and Engels reached Germany, the insurgent workers and urban petty bourgeoisie

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 6, p. 504.

and the peasants had struck the first blows at the feudal-absolutist system and had wrested concessions from the German government. But the fruits of the people's victory were gathered by the big bourgeoisie. Thus, in Prussia the king summoned a new government headed by the leaders of the big Rhenish bourgeoisie—Camphausen and Hansemann.

Having taken power, the liberal bourgeoisie quickly showed that it was an anti-revolutionary force, gravitating more and more to the side of the counter-revolution. Barely had it settled accounts with its old adversaries—the absolute monarchy, feudal aristocracy and bureaucrats—than it turned against its new enemy, the proletariat. What really alarmed it was not the proletariat of that moment, but what it threatened to become, and what it had already become in France. Hence, the bourgeoisie saw its salvation in a compromise with the monarchy and nobility.

As a result of this treachery, the bourgeois revolution failed to win a decisive victory anywhere. Real power, the army, police and the state machine, remained in the hands of the landlord class and the monarchy. The decisive battles were still ahead.

Such was the situation in Germany when Marx and Engels arrived there.

They had chosen Cologne as their place of residence for a definite reason. Cologne was the chief industrial centre of the Rhine Province, where the bourgeoisie had been especially active and where the masses had been awakened to political action earlier than in other parts of Germany. Moreover, it was one of the main centres of the working-class movement and, lastly, the judiciary there had adopted the *Code Napoléon*, which favoured the





Proletarische Partei.

Neue Rheinische Zeitung.
Organ der Demokratie.





plan of Marx and Engels to launch a major daily revolutionary newspaper.

The establishment of a popular revolutionary newspaper was important for their strategic and tactical plan. The task was to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution, take it to its end, and at the same time prepare the masses for socialist revolution.

Marx and Engels had repeatedly stressed that a proletarian party was essential for socialist revolution. They had begun organising such a party years before the revolutionary events in Germany, and continued this work upon arriving in the country. They took a number of measures aimed at establishing branches of the Communist League and workers' organisations. However, their efforts to form an all-German independent proletarian party encountered grave difficulties. The German working class of those days consisted in the main not of industrial workers but of craftsmen; it was still weak, unorganised, immature and filled with petty-bourgeois prejudices. The conditions for a mass proletarian party did not yet exist in the economically backward and politically fragmented Germany. The two or three hundred members of the Communist League dispersed throughout the country were barely noticeable in the vast popular movement suddenly set in motion.

Marx and Engels, who were foreign to sectarianism, had to take into account the state of the proletariat at that time. Consequently, to avoid running ahead and becoming isolated from the masses, they decided to align themselves with the growing democratic movement and to take their stand on its advanced Left, virtually proletarian flank. So, it was essential that Communists joining democratic organisations should retain their own political

posture and criticise the hesitation and inconsistency of the petty-bourgeois democrats.

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Engels in the
Revolution of 1848-49

While attaching importance to the work Communists did in the various democratic societies, Marx and Engels called on them, too, to be active in the workers' unions, for this was essential in preparation for the establishment of a mass proletarian party. A newspaper, they held, would serve as a political guide for the Communists. In these conditions the banner of the newspaper which they had in mind could only be "that of democracy, but that of a democracy which everywhere, in every point, emphasised its specific proletarian character".*

To carry out this plan Marx and Engels joined the Cologne Democratic Society and recommended their supporters to do likewise. The preparations for launching the newspaper now took up most of their time. But more than six weeks were to pass before its first number appeared. The main difficulty was financial. Marx solicited shareholders in Cologne, while Engels left for Barmen for the same purpose and from there visited the neighbouring towns. Despite all his efforts Engels managed to get subscriptions for only 14 shares. He wrote to Marx on April 25, 1848: "There's damned little prospect for the shares here.... Even these radical bourgeois here see us as their future main enemies and have no intention of putting into our hands weapons which we would very shortly turn against themselves.

"Nothing whatever is to be got out of my old man... . Sooner than present us with 1,000 talers, he would pepper us with a thousand balls of grape."**

At last, on June 1, 1848, the first number of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* made its appearance with

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 166.

** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, pp. 172-73.

the subtitle: "Organ of Democracy". Marx was chief editor and the other editors were Heinrich Bürgers, Ernst Dronke, Frederick Engels, Georg Weerth, Ferdinand Wolff, and Wilhelm Wolff.

The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, headed by Communists and acting as an "organ of democracy", was, as Lenin put it, "the finest and unsurpassed organ of the revolutionary proletariat". *

It was outstanding not simply because it was the only paper giving the proletariat the right bearings in the complex class struggle of 1848-49. What made it even more outstanding was its remarkable ability to see ahead, and the revolutionary ardour of its articles, which were written forcefully, with exceptional skill, brilliance, and wit. This, of course, was not surprising because it was headed by Marx, who enlisted a committed staff of Communist League members, a group of talented collaborators, among whom first place undoubtedly belonged to Engels.

"The editorial constitution," Engels recalled later, "was simply the dictatorship of Marx. A big daily paper, which has to be ready at a definite hour, cannot observe a consistent policy with any other constitution. Moreover, Marx's dictatorship was a matter of course here, was undisputed and willingly recognised by all of us. It was primarily his clear vision and firm attitude that made this publication the most famous German newspaper of the years of revolution."**

At first Marx, as editor, wrote relatively little-- he exercised the general political leadership, and bore the main burden of the organisational work. Most of the main political articles were written by Engels who, thanks to his facile pen and journalistic talent, was indispensable. Here, too, as in

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 81.

** K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 167.

other spheres, Marx and Engels splendidly supplemented each other.

"Being a veritable walking encyclopaedia," Marx wrote about Engels, "he is capable ... of working at any hour of the day or night." *

With all the fervour of a revolutionary, Engels devoted himself to the newspaper. "Those were revolutionary times," he recalled subsequently, "and at such times it is a pleasure to work in the daily press. One sees for oneself the effect of every word, one sees one's articles strike like hand-grenades and explode." ** These shells were discharged by a sharp eye and skilful hand, and always hit the target.

The first and chief task which the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* set itself was to combat the widespread illusions that the March battles had completed the revolution and that the fruits could now be gathered. Ridiculing these sentiments, Engels wrote: "And that, upright German, has indeed been your fate once again. ... You believe that you have overcome the police state? Deception! You believe that you possess freedom of association, freedom of the press, the arming of the people and other beautiful slogans which were bandied about on the March barricades? Deception, nothing but deception!

*"But when the blissful glow wore off,
"Beloved friend, you stood bewildered."****

Marx and Engels exposed the treacherous role of the big bourgeoisie who had failed to carry out any of the tasks of the bourgeois revolution and who, in fear of the revolutionary people, had entered into a defensive and offensive alliance with reaction. They showed the true worth of the "great deeds" of the leaders of the bourgeois, the Camphausen-Hansemann government.

In a number of *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* articles

* Marx, Engels.
Collected Works,
Vol. 39, Moscow, 1983,
p. 391.

** Marx, Engels,
Werke, Bd. 22,
S. 76-77.

*** Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 7, Moscow, 1977,
p. 248.

Marx, Engels and Wilhelm Wolff denounced the treachery of the big bourgeoisie in relation to the peasantry: the bourgeoisie not only failed to lift a finger to abolish feudalism in the countryside, but also went out of its way to wrest from the peasants the concessions they had won by direct action during the March battles. The policy of the big bourgeoisie in the peasant question bore all the hallmarks of the "bourgeois fear of revolutionarily attacking any kind of property whatever. Wretched, timid and narrow-minded egoism blinded the Prussian bourgeoisie to such an extent that it repulsed the *peasantry*, its *essential ally*." * Acting in the interests of the peasants, the paper advocated abolition of feudal services and landownership. Thus were laid the foundations for the worker-peasant alliance with the former in the lead.

Marx and Engels ridiculed the representative assemblies convened in Germany, for instead of revolutionary action and real struggle against reaction, they indulged in parliamentary talk, in useless and cowardly resolutions. The All-German National Assembly came in for their most scathing criticism. They described it as the "Frankfurt talking shop", an "assembly of old hags" who engaged in interminable debates about the best agenda or the best constitution at a time when the reactionary governments "have placed bayonets on the agenda". **

They sought to bring the democratic petty bourgeoisie into action, and attacked their leaders who, by their endless indecision and incapacity for revolutionary action, facilitated the offensive of the reactionaries. Step by step, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* followed the behaviour of the "Left factions" formed by the petty-bourgeois democrats in the Berlin and Frankfurt national assemblies, and

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, Moscow, 1977, p. 175.

** *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, p. 49.

criticised their cowardice and double-dealing.

In contrast to the wavering leaders of the petty-bourgeois democrats, Marx and Engels called on the people to fight mercilessly against the feudal reactionaries and bourgeois counter-revolutionaries. "Ours is not a *legal basis*," they wrote, "but a *revolutionary basis*."*

They believed that the establishment of a revolutionary dictatorship of the people was vital for the unfolding revolution. "Every provisional political set-up following a revolution requires a dictatorship, and an energetic dictatorship at that,"** stressed the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

One of the main tasks of revolutionary dictatorship, the paper wrote, was to eliminate the old state apparatus of the aristocratic bureaucracy, which served the reactionary forces and which had to be replaced with a genuinely revolutionary system of government.

The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* aligned the revolution in Germany with the revolutionary struggles in other countries of Europe, above all France. In a succession of articles, most of them by Engels, it also came out in favour of the British, Belgian, Italian, Swiss, and other democrats. It had every legitimate reason to call itself an organ not only of the German, but of European democracy in general.

It devoted much attention to the struggles of the working class in England and other countries, propagated the idea of international proletarian solidarity, and used the experiences of their class brothers abroad to educate the German workers.

In a number of articles Engels set forth the fundamental principles of the national policy of the proletariat and its concrete forms in the revolution of 1848-49. He analysed the character, class con-

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 8, p. 154.
** *Ibid.*, Vol. 7,
p. 431.

tent and driving forces of the national struggle of the numerous peoples — Hungarians, Italians, and the Slav peoples — then under the yoke of Austria and Prussia.

With all the force and ardour of a revolutionary internationalist, he denounced the treachery of the German bourgeoisie, which continued the old oppressive policy in relation to other peoples in Germany.

Emancipation of oppressed nationalities, Engels stressed, was necessary in the interests of the revolution. It would be a blow against the feudal-absolutist system and a powerful lever for bringing the oppressed nations into the common revolutionary struggle. As he saw it, ending national oppression was an indispensable condition for Germany's future as a free, democratic nation. "Germany will liberate herself to the extent to which she sets free neighbouring nations." *

For Marx and Engels the national question was not an isolated, self-sufficient question, but an element of the general problem of unfolding the revolution. Hence their different appraisals of the different national movements. In the concrete situation of 1848-49, they wholeheartedly supported the Polish national liberation movement, directed against reactionary Prussia, Austria, and Russian tsarism, which thus gained paramount importance for all European democracy. Marx and Engels threw their support resolutely behind the Hungarians. They also welcomed the Czech uprising in Prague against the Austrian yoke. But their attitude to the national movement of the Czechs and other Slav peoples, then part of the Austrian Empire, changed when Russian tsarism and the Hapsburg monarchy began to use the national struggle of these peoples for their reactionary aims. While correctly evaluat-

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 7, p. 166.

ing the national movement of the Austrian Slavs at this stage as a factor that weakened the forces of revolution and strengthened the camp of reaction, Engels in his articles "The Magyar Struggle" and "Democratic Pan-Slavism", and later in his book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, arrived at one-sided conclusions. He held that the Austrian Slavs had already played their role in history, that they lacked the prerequisites necessary for independent national development. He believed that in the course of time, these nations would be gradually swallowed and assimilated by the bigger nations. He failed to take into account that, together with a tendency towards centralisation which led to the emergence of big countries, nascent capitalism engendered another tendency--the birth of national movements among the small nations, their striving for emancipation from oppression and for independent national states.

Making his predictions Engels made this most pertinent reservation: "If at any epoch while they were oppressed, the Slavs began a *new revolutionary history*, that by itself would prove their viability." * And this was, indeed, borne out by the future destiny of the Slav peoples of Central and Southern Europe.

Battling tirelessly and passionately against all the reactionary forces, Marx and Engels sought to release the revolutionary energies of the proletariat, peasants and oppressed nationalities, to rally the masses for the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and, in this way, to create favourable conditions for the subsequent struggle for the socialist revolution.

The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* occupied an important place in the revolutionary work of the two friends who made it a powerful propaganda weap-

* *Ibid.*, Vol. 8,
p. 371.

on that helped them organise the proletarian wing of the democratic movement. Later, Engels was wholly justified to write that "no German newspaper, before or since, has ever had the same power and influence or been able to electrify the proletarian masses as effectively as the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*." *

Its editorial staff, which in practice had taken the place of the Central Committee of the Communist League, used the paper to guide the members of the League, who, scattered throughout Germany, headed many of the workers' organisations in the country.

Petty-bourgeois opportunist elements in the working-class movement, men of the Right and Left, were an impediment to rallying the proletariat and forming a broad democratic front. Stephan Born, a member of the Communist League who formed a Central Committee of workers in Berlin and afterwards an all-German organisation known as the Workers' Brotherhood, with its centre in Leipzig, was spokesman of the Right wing.

Born adapted himself to the backward workers and craftsmen and, focusing attention chiefly on economic struggle, on a number of minor demands, deflected the workers from the common political tasks facing the German people. Lenin, referring to the differences between Marx and Stephan Born, wrote about "*the two tendencies in the working-class movement of 1848 in Germany, the Born tendency and the Marxist tendency.*" **

Another representative of the opportunist tendency was Andreas Gottschalk, also a member of the Communist League and leader of the Cologne Workers' Association who, unlike Born, concealed

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 172.

** V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, Moscow, 1977, p. 139.

his opportunism behind "Left" phraseology. Influenced by Weitling and "true socialism", Gottschalk failed to understand the bourgeois nature of the revolution and advanced the ludicrous "Left" slogan of immediate struggle "for a workers' republic"; he believed that the workers' participation in the general democratic movement was "opportunism" and denied the necessity for an alliance with the peasant masses. Sectarianism and the "Left" phraseology with which Gottschalk was contaminated were combined with propaganda of the most moderate, "legal", means of struggle.

Taking his criticism by Marx and Engels in a bad spirit, Gottschalk resigned from the Communist League. Yet Marx and Engels had not come out publicly in the press against either Born or Gottschalk, because the forming of proletarian organisations was immensely important as such. The political line of the Cologne Workers' Association changed in July 1848 when Joseph Moll was elected chairman (Marx became temporary chairman in October). The change in the leadership soon made itself felt in the activity of the Cologne Association, which launched successful educational and propaganda work not only among workers, but also among peasants in the nearby villages, and in military units.

In addition to their political and organising work in the Workers' Association, Marx and Engels were active in the Cologne Democratic Society, where they carried through an independent line, criticised the mistakes and illusions of the petty-bourgeois democrats, and sought to win the masses to their side.

Their criticism grew sharper as the counter-revolution switched to the offensive and the hour of the decisive battle drew near.

The heavy defeat suffered by the Paris proletariat in June 1848 was a spur to the counter-revolution all over Europe. In June there had taken place in Paris the world's first great civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie provoked the workers to an armed uprising which after four days of heroic fighting on the barricades was drowned in blood. The capitalist press all over the world lauded General Cavaignac who crushed the uprising, and vilified the vanquished proletarians. It was then that the genuinely proletarian revolutionary character of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* made itself felt with particular force and clarity.

"The insurrection of the Paris workers in June 1848," Engels wrote later, "found us at our post. From the first shot we were unconditionally on the side of the insurgents.... We had the satisfaction of being the only paper in Germany, and almost the only one in Europe, that held aloft the banner of the crushed proletariat at a moment when the bourgeois and petty bourgeois of all countries were overwhelming the vanquished with a torrent of slander." *

The articles about the Paris insurrection were all written by Engels, save one by Marx. In these articles Engels came forward for the first time as the workers' military theorist. It is worth noting that he began his study of military problems by examining the question of insurrection. He lauded the large scale of the insurrection, and admired the courage, the quickly improvised organisation, and the unanimity of the insurgents.

Analysing the military operations of the insurgent workers, he underlined the cardinal mistake made by them: "Once again the people were too magnanimous", they failed to reply to the rockets

* K. Marx and
F. Engels, *Selected
Works*, Vol. 3. p. 170.

and howitzers by the sole method of retaliation
arson.

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Engels in the
Revolution of 1848-49

The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* warned the masses against the counter-revolutionary coup then being prepared in Germany. "It is possible that arms will decide the issue. The side that has the greater courage and consistency will win." *

At the end of August, Marx went to Berlin and Vienna to consolidate the ties with the workers' and democratic movements in those two capitals. Also, he was to collect funds for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, which had been deserted by the last of its shareholders after its articles in support of the Paris insurgents. The functions of editor-in-chief fell to the lot of Frederick Engels. Engels also headed the work of organising the masses for the struggle against the counter-revolution, which had come into the open more and more brazenly. On September 13, he addressed a public meeting in Cologne held under the auspices of the paper. Acting on his suggestion, the meeting unanimously adopted an appeal to the Berlin National Assembly, urging it not to submit to its dissolution then being prepared by the government and to organise armed resistance. He seconded a proposal made by Wilhelm Wolff for setting up a Committee of Public Safety in Cologne. Marx and Engels were elected members of the committee which was to be a revolutionary body of the masses.

Four days later, on September 17, near the village of Worringen in the Rhineland, a new meeting, attended by thousands of workers and peasants, was held under the joint auspices of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and the Cologne Workers' Association. The crowds from Cologne carrying red banners were joined by delegations from the neighbouring towns. Engels was elected secretary of the

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 7, p. 433.

meeting. The meeting approved the appeal sent to the Berlin Assembly by the Cologne meeting on September 13 and announced its recognition of the Cologne Committee of Public Safety. At Engels's suggestion, the meeting sent an address to the Frankfurt National Assembly, calling upon it, in the event of a conflict with Prussia, to do everything to uphold the national interests. In his speech he put forward the slogan of struggle for a "democratic social *red republic*"; this slogan was incorporated into the resolution adopted by the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Frankfurt National Assembly committed another disgraceful act: it approved the armistice with Denmark, concluded at Malmö, thus committing an act of treachery against the national movement in Schleswig-Holstein. The news of this reached Cologne together with the news of an uprising of workers and peasants in and around Frankfurt in retaliation for the treachery of the Frankfurt Parliament. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* immediately declared its solidarity with the insurgents, although it realised how slight were the chances of victory. The Committee of Public Safety, the Workers' Association and the Democratic Society organised a mass meeting in Cologne on September 20, the keynote of which was solidarity with the barricade fighters. Engels spoke at the meeting.

As Engels had foreseen, the Frankfurt uprising was crushed. Summing up its results, he wrote: "The people, who are unorganised and poorly armed, are confronted by all the other social classes, who are well organised and fully armed. That is the reason why up to now the people have been defeated." * But the masses were still a long way from having said their last word. Pointing out that the peasant war that had broken out in the spring of

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 444.

1848 had not yet achieved its aim, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* summoned the peasants to resolute struggle for liberation from feudalism.

Gravely alarmed by the growing mass movement in the Rhine Province, in the chief town of which the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was published and which housed the executive of the Communist League headed by Marx and Engels, the Prussian government moved in large contingents of troops and waited for a convenient opportunity to provoke the masses and launch a bloodbath. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* insistently warned against a premature, unorganised uprising. On September 25, Schapper and Hermann Becker, prominent members of the Cologne working-class movement, were arrested. This was a deliberate provocation. Joseph Moll, one of the most popular leaders of the Workers' Association, was also threatened with arrest. The workers were determined to prevent the arrest of Moll and upon hearing of the approach of Prussian troops began to throw up barricades. Only with great difficulty did Marx and Engels and their supporters restrain the masses from premature action. "At this moment," wrote the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, "when no large issue would drive the entire people into combat, and any rising would be bound to fail, such a rising would be the more senseless since tremendous events might occur within the next few days and one would thus render oneself unfit to fight *before* the day of decision." *

Seeing that their provocation had failed, the authorities declared a state of siege in Cologne on September 26, disarmed the civic militia, closed the workers' and democratic organisations, and banned the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Simultaneously, warrants were issued for the arrest of several mem-

* *Ibid.*, p. 464.

bers of the staff, including Engels, who had been particularly active in organising and leading the mass September movement in the Rhine Province.

Having no desire of languishing in prison at the time when revolution was on the march, Engels and three other members of the staff—Dronke and the two Wolffs—left Cologne. Engels spent a few days in Barmen, where he met his parents. There he quarrelled bitterly with his father. This was not surprising in view of the fury evoked in the father by the son's revolutionary activity. Together with Dronke he departed for Brussels, where they were immediately arrested, flung into prison and a few hours later escorted as "vagrants" to the French frontier whence they travelled to Paris.

Paris, the city of the triumphant counter-revolution, made an extremely painful impression on Engels.

Comparing Paris after the February days of 1848, "during the brief intoxication of the republic's honeymoon", with the Paris of October 1848, he noted in his travel notes, "From Paris to Berne": "Between the Paris of those days and now there lay the 15th May and the 25th June, there lay the most fearful struggle the world had ever seen. there lay a sea of blood and fifteen thousand dead. Cavaignac's shells had blown Paris's irrepressible gaiety sky-high; the sound of the *Marseillaise* ... had ceased; ... the workers, who had neither bread nor arms, ground their teeth in suppressed resentment.... But Paris was dead, it was no longer Paris....

"I could endure it no longer in this dead Paris. I had to leave it, no matter whither. So first of all to Switzerland. I had not much money, that meant going on foot....

"Thus one fine morning I set out and without any fixed plan marched due south." *

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It took Engels a fortnight to make his way on foot from Paris via Southern France to Switzerland. He came first to Geneva, then to Lausanne, whence, after getting some money from Marx, he left for Berne and took up residence there for the time being.

The enforced stay in Switzerland, sheltered from the revolutionary storms, was unbearable for a man like Engels with his fighting spirit and his longing to be in the revolutionary struggle. Marx, however, restrained him from returning to Germany. "How are things? ... Shan't I be able to come back soon?" Engels wrote to Marx and again bombarded him with letters filled with impatience. "I keep thinking that I shall soon be able to return. This lazing about in foreign parts, where you can't really do anything and are completely outside the movement, is truly unbearable. I am rapidly coming to the conclusion that detention for questioning in Cologne is better than life in free Switzerland," ** he wrote on January 8, 1849.

To be sure, his stay abroad was not at all a "lazing about". He took part in the Swiss working-class movement, and in December 1848 attended a workers' congress in Berne as delegate of the Lausanne Workers' Association, which had issued him a mandate as a "veteran fighter for the cause of the proletariat". In Berne he wrote a series of articles about Switzerland for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, which had resumed publication on October 12, 1848, after the state of siege was lifted in Cologne. In the articles he produced an incisive exposition of the provincialism that reigned on Switzerland's political scene, the petty strife between the cantons, and the narrow-mindedness of what

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 7, pp. 513-14.
** *Ibid.*, Vol. 38,
pp. 183, 185.

the German petty-bourgeois democrats described as a "model" bourgeois republic. The articles were also aimed against the federalist principle of uniting Germany on the model of Switzerland or the USA, which was advocated by the German petty-bourgeois democrats. Federalism, Engels wrote later, was suitable only in countries that consisted of several nations.

At that time, Engels's attention was attracted by the revolutionary war of the Hungarians against the Austrian monarchy, which broke out in the autumn of 1848.

When still in Switzerland, Engels wrote an article "The Magyar Struggle", and upon returning to Germany in the middle of January 1849, that subject became central in his journalistic writings. He published nearly a hundred articles on the heroic war of the Hungarian people in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, expressing his admiration of the courage shown by the Hungarian army, the commanders' art of manoeuvre, the combination of army actions with guerrilla operations in the enemy rear, and the rapid organisation of arms production. These advantages of revolutionary warfare over the outdated strategy of the Austrian command enabled the Hungarian army to go on the offensive against superior enemy forces. Later, Engels wrote to Marx: "At that time, drawing on *Austrian* bulletins, we of the *N. Rh. Z.* made splendidly accurate guesses as to the course of the Hungarian war, and prognostications, if cautious, proved brilliantly correct." *

In his articles about Hungary, Engels showed that he was an extraordinarily shrewd politician and an outstanding military theorist, strategist and tactician.

When Engels arrived in Cologne, the revolution

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 39, p. 128.

had come upon hard times. The counter-revolution had launched an offensive all along the line. On October 31, 1848, Vienna, after a heroic defence by the workers, had fallen to the counter-revolutionaries. In this connection Marx wrote in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*: "The second act of the drama has just been performed in Vienna, its first act having been staged in Paris under the title of *The June Days*.... We shall soon see the third act performed in Berlin." * And true enough, the Prussian counter-revolution, encouraged by the events in Austria, was champing at the bit. On November 2, the King summoned to power the openly reactionary Brandenburg government, and eight days later General Wrangel's troops entered Berlin.

The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* did not hesitate to attack the counter-revolution. It called for resistance to the exaction of taxes, for arming the people and setting up Committees of Public Safety. The Prussian National Assembly, on the other hand, confined itself to an appeal for passive resistance. It was dissolved on December 5.

Such were the inevitable results of the perfidy of the big bourgeoisie, the dithering and irresolution of the leaders of the petty-bourgeois democrats, and the disgraceful cowardice of the National Assembly.

The counter-revolution now attempted to square accounts with the leaders of the proletariat. On February 7, 1849, Marx and Engels were ordered to appear before the court on a charge of "insulting the authorities" in the article "Arrests", published on July 5, 1848. In the court, the accused became the accusers. "It was a delight to see and hear with what great superiority the black-and-white reaction was opposed." ** So wrote Lessner, a member

* *Ibid.*, Vol. 7,
p. 505.
** *Reminiscences of
Marx and Engels*,
p. 176.

of the Communist League, about the trial. The court did not dare to bring in a verdict of guilty, and dismissed the case.

The same decision was taken by the jury that tried Marx, Schapper, and democrat Schneider II on the following day "for incitement to rebellion" during the November events.

By the spring of 1849, the situation in Germany had become particularly tense and strained: the counter-revolution was now concentrating its forces to deliver the final blow. The day of the decisive encounter between the two camps now mobilising their forces — revolution and counter-revolution — was drawing nearer.

Particularly dangerous at this moment were the intermediate, wavering and irresolute elements who tried to reconcile the irreconcilable, to evade decisive action, and immobilise the masses. For this reason, Marx and Engels, who had tirelessly exposed the wavering, cowardice and illusions of the petty-bourgeois leaders, made their criticism sharper still in an endeavour to free the masses from their influence.

In mid-April 1849, the two friends and their supporters broke off relations with the petty-bourgeois democracy. The Cologne Workers' Association, which was under their leadership, also withdrew from the Democratic Society. The political experience acquired by the masses and the disappointment with the petty-bourgeois democracy had created a situation in which it was now possible to pose the question of forming a proletarian party.

Marx, Engels and their followers discovered that serious differences on the time of organising the party, and on its nature, had arisen between them and Joseph Moll, Heinrich Bauer and

Johann Eccarius, who had, following Moll's arrival in London, formed a new Central Authority of the Communist League. In the winter of 1848-49, Moll was sent back to Germany to revive the League's secret communities on the basis of the new Rules adopted in London. Marx and Engels objected to the revival of the secret organisation, since it was still possible for the League to operate legally in Germany. They also rejected the new Rules as being un-communist and conspiratorial in spirit.

By the spring of 1849, the situation changed. At a number of congresses of workers' societies of various regions of Germany, there was evidence that the workers were turning their backs on the guilds and were eager to have a national organisation of German workers. It was decided to form a united committee in Leipzig, which was to convene an all-German workers' congress with the purpose of founding a general German workers' league.

Seeing these new trends in the working-class movement, Marx and Engels, and their followers, decided to join the emergent national organisation of German workers in order to build it up into a mass proletarian party, with Communists as its leading core. But subsequent developments intervened.

In paving the way for a proletarian party, Marx and Engels attached importance in ideological terms to the publication of Marx's lectures on wage labour and capital, which were a systematic exposition of the basic principles of the Marxist economic doctrine. Marx and Engels aimed at turning the Cologne Workers' Association into a centre which would unite the workers' organisations throughout the Rhineland and Westphalia, and thereafter at forming a general association of workers' organisations. They strengthened their ties with the mem-

bers of the Communist League in different parts of the country, giving them instructions and urging them to establish workers' organisations in the localities.

Anticipating the decisive battles, the tone of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* became sharper and more passionate. Formally an organ of democracy, it increasingly assumed an open and definite proletarian character. Each issue, and every extra edition, bore the imprint of the impending struggle; the April and May extra editions in particular urged the people to prepare for a decisive assault.

In this strained atmosphere even the Frankfurt parliament, this "Frankfurt talking shop", began "saving" the country in its own parliamentary fashion. In reply to the intensified counter-revolutionary offensive, the Frankfurt parliament, instead of addressing a resolute call to the masses boldly to take the line of revolutionary struggle, drafted in great haste an Imperial Constitution. This document, together with a declaration on civil rights and an imperial electoral law, was completed in March 1849. But neither the king of Prussia, whom the Frankfurt parliament had elected Emperor of Germany—a paper creation, since the country had not been united—nor the other German governments had any intention of recognising the Imperial Constitution. On April 28, the Prussian government declared the Imperial Constitution an anarchist and revolutionary document, and concentrated troops in the vicinity of Frankfurt. It became clear that the conflict could be resolved only by armed struggle.

The mass of petty bourgeois rose in defence of the Imperial Constitution. The movement was joined by the peasants, who were languishing under the burden of taxes and feudal services. But

the main thing was that the working class, for whom the state was much more than just the Imperial Constitution, had now appeared on the arena as an active force. The workers had gone into battle to utilise the situation with a view to consolidating and extending the revolution.

By the beginning of May, Western and Southern Germany—the Rhine Province, Westphalia, the Palatinate, Baden, and Saxony—were in rebellion which, it so happened, was everywhere headed by the petty bourgeoisie.

The Frankfurt parliament, whose Imperial Constitution was the pretext for the uprising, quickly disappeared from the arena of the struggle, and nobody noticed its inglorious disappearance.

Marx and Engels came to the aid of the insurgents, endeavoured to give the movement a conscious aim, and to help organise the struggle.

To Engels belongs the historic merit of drawing up the plan for an armed uprising, which was the first concrete model of a Marxist approach to the art of insurrection.

For the first phase of the uprising, Engels believed that the vital place was Baden, where the newly formed provisional revolutionary government had the support of the overwhelming majority of the population and of the army, which had sided with the people, and had stocks of equipment and arms. The adjoining districts were either in rebellion (the Palatinate and the Rhine Province), or about to rebel (Württemberg, Hesse, Nassau and Franconia). He pointed out that it was necessary immediately, without losing a minute, to extend the uprising from Baden to Hesse-Darmstadt, Frankfurt, Nassau and Württemberg; it was necessary immediately to select eight to ten thousand men from the regular troops, throw them against Frankfurt

and bring the All-German National Assembly under the influence and control of the insurgent people and army.

Engels shrewdly defined the sole correct direction of the main blow—from insurgent Baden northwards against Frankfurt, the capture of which would be of tremendous moral and political importance, and would impart an all-German character to the uprising (the National Assembly was located in Frankfurt). Moreover, the capture of Frankfurt would be of great strategic importance for an offensive by the revolutionary forces towards the northwest and the insurgent areas in Rhenish Prussia.

In his view, the essential condition for the victorious outcome of these daring military operations was to consolidate and organise the forces of the uprising. “Further, the power of the insurrection should have been centralised, the necessary funds placed at its disposal and through the immediate abolition of all feudal burdens that great majority of the population which tills the soil should have been given a stake in the insurrection. The establishment of a common central authority for war and finance with full powers to issue paper money, to begin with for Baden and the Palatinate, and the abolition of all feudal burdens in Baden and every area occupied by the insurgent army would for the moment have sufficed to give the uprising quite a different energetic character.

“All that had, however, to happen in the first moment if it were to be carried out with the swiftness which alone could guarantee success.”*

This stress on the maximum encouragement of the revolutionary energy of the masses, on firm centralised leadership, on bold and swift action, was a vital feature of Engels’s plan for the armed uprising.

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, Moscow, 1978, pp. 173-74.

The second major area of the uprising was the Rhine Province with its mass of industrial workers. However, Engels soberly assessed the political and military-strategic situation, and held that only specially favourable conditions could make Rhenish Prussia a powerful factor of the uprising. The province was surrounded by fortresses garrisoned by about one-third of the Prussian army and intersected in all directions by railways. These circumstances necessitated vigorous revolutionary action from the outside and active aid from the other insurgent districts which could breach the military power concentrated by the counter-revolution on the Rhine, disorganise its command, and intensify revolutionary sentiment among the soldiers. Only then could the uprising in the Rhine Province, with the support of industrial workers, be transformed into a force which would extend and deepen the uprising and raise the entire movement to a higher level. Engels linked his plan with the general prospects of the revolutionary struggle in Europe, with a new upsurge of revolution in France and Italy, and with the revolutionary war in Hungary. In sum, Engels's plan for armed struggle in the spring of 1849 was a bold and fearless plan, based, however, on a sober analysis of the prevailing political, strategic and military-technical conditions.

On the 9th and 10th of May an armed uprising broke out in the Mark and Berg industrial area of the Rhine Province, involving such centres as Elberfeld, Solingen, Hagen and Iserlohn.

Upon receiving news of the uprising, Engels immediately drew up a plan for aiding the insurgent districts on the right bank of the Rhine. The essence of this plan was as follows:

"Above all things avoid unnecessary disorders in the fortresses and garrison towns;

“make a diversion on the left bank of the Rhine in the smaller towns, in the factory areas and in the countryside in order to hold the Rhine garrisons in check;

“finally, throw all available forces into the insurgent district on the right bank of the Rhine, spread the insurrection further and attempt to organise here the nucleus of a revolutionary army around the army reserve.” *

Upon acquainting his friends and colleagues with his plan, Engels abandoned pen for rifle and, on May 10, set out for Elberfeld in his native Wuppertal, where a rising had broken out the day before.

He found Elberfeld in a state of confusion, disorder, dismay, and incapacity on the part of the petty-bourgeois leadership of the Committee of Public Safety to take urgently needed measures. There were, however, several hundred armed workers, among them 400 to 500 Solingen proletarians, well organised and full of determination. Relying on the best worker elements, Engels launched energetic military preparations. Having obtained from the Committee of Public Safety permission to supervise the erection of barricades, he quickly formed special companies of sappers, brought the barricades into order, rebuilt part of those already erected, took measures to arm the workers, placed men and guns in position, etc.

He tried hard to get the Committee of Public Safety to adopt a firm and resolute line, and insisted on the immediate disarming of the Elberfeld militia, which was an organisation of the big bourgeoisie. He suggested that the arms taken from the militia should be distributed among the workers. His further plans envisaged extending the uprising

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 163.

to the neighbouring districts and organising to defend the entire Mark and Berg area.

With a view to maintaining the common front with the petty-bourgeois democrats at this stage, Engels did not advance any specifically proletarian, socialist demands. His plan of action was a plan for resolute, consistently democratic, revolutionary struggle against the counter-revolution.

But the very fact of the arrival of Engels, one of the leaders of the "red party", one of the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, and his vigorous activity alarmed the Elberfeld bourgeoisie. Under its pressure, the Committee of Public Safety decided to arrest Engels, but did not do so for fear of the armed workers. Afterwards Engels recalled with gratitude the Solingen workers: "Had it not been for the Solingers, these bourgeois would have bunged me into jail, where I would probably have been left as an expiatory sacrifice for the Prussian gentlemen." *

On the morning of May 14, the Committee of Public Safety decided on his expulsion from the town on the grounds that "*his presence could give rise to misunderstandings as to the character of the movement*". The inhabitants heard of this on the morning of the 15th. The order caused indignation and discontent among the workers who insisted that he remain, pledging "to protect him with their lives". But, upon calmly assessing the situation, and realising that the time for an open conflict with the petty-bourgeois democracy had not yet come, Engels addressed the workers, calmed them, and then, having handed over his post to his adjutant, left Elberfeld for Cologne.

A report in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on the events in Elberfeld ended with the following words addressed to the workers:

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 43, Moscow, 1988, p. 420.

"Let the workers of the Berg Country and the Mark, who have shown such astonishing affection for and devotion to a member of our editorial board, bear in mind that the present movement is only the prologue to another movement, a thousand times more serious, in which the issue will concern their own, the workers', most vital interests. This new revolutionary movement will be the result of the present movement and as soon as it occurs Engels—on this the workers can confidently rely—like all the other editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, will be at his post, and no power on earth will induce him to forsake it." *

Meanwhile the uprising in Elberfeld had taken a catastrophic turn. The workers' detachments, enraged by the treacherous inactivity of the petty-bourgeois leaders, left the town to break through to the regions in the grip of the uprising. Units of the Elberfeld and Solingen workers managed to get through to the Palatinate where many of them joined up with the volunteer corps of Willich (a member of the Communist League), in whose ranks Engels, too, fought later.

In view of the tempestuous growth of the mass movement, the counter-revolutionaries did not venture to touch the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, whose bold and powerful voice resounded throughout Germany.

"Outside, throughout the Reich," Engels wrote later, "wonder was expressed that we carried on our activities so unconcernedly within a Prussian fortress of the first rank, in the face of a garrison of 8,000 troops and in the face of the guardhouse; but, on account of the eight rifles with bayonets and 250 live cartridges in the editorial room, and the red Jacobin caps of the compositors, our house was reckoned by the officers also as a fortress

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, Moscow, 1977, p. 449.

which was not to be taken by a mere *coup de main*.”*

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But the defeat of the uprising on the Rhine signified a mortal blow to the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* as well. The counter-revolution now plucked up courage to settle accounts with the organ of the revolutionary proletariat. Court proceedings were instituted against some of the editors, while others, on the grounds that they were not Prussians, were ordered to leave the country immediately. Taking advantage of the fact that Marx in 1845 had relinquished Prussian citizenship, the government issued an order for his deportation as a “foreigner” who had infringed the “right of hospitality”. On May 17 a warrant to arrest Engels was issued for his involvement in the Elberfeld rising, followed in June with an order to apprehend him.

The last number of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* appeared on May 19, 1849, printed in red ink.

In a farewell address to the Cologne workers, the editorial board wrote: “In bidding you farewell the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* thank you for the sympathy you have shown them. Their last word everywhere and always will be: *emancipation of the working class*!”**

Thirty-five years later, recalling the end of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Engels said with legitimate pride: “We had to surrender our fortress, but we withdrew with our arms and baggage, with band playing and flag flying, the flag of the last issue, a red issue.”***

After the suppression of the paper, Marx and Engels left for Southwest Germany, then in the grip of insurrection. They did everything to extend and deepen it, to arouse the petty-bourgeois democrats and get them to pursue an energetic revolutionary line.

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 171.

** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 467.

*** K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 171.

In Frankfurt, Marx and Engels tried to prevail on the Left deputies, who were in the majority after the departure of the Rights, to summon to that city part of the revolutionary Baden and Palatinate forces, and to place themselves at the head of the insurrection, thus giving it an all-German complexion. But their efforts proved in vain.

Arriving thereupon in Mannheim (Baden), Marx and Engels advised the troops to head for Frankfurt on their own. But the Baden leaders, who, as Engels said, lacked courage, energy, intelligence, and initiative, turned a deaf ear to their advice.

From Baden Marx and Engels moved to the other centre of the uprising—the Palatinate—where they met the members of the provisional government. Karl d’Ester, a Communist League member in the government, tried in vain to prod his fellow-ministers to action. On their way to Bingen, where Marx’s wife and children lived at the time, Marx and Engels were arrested by Hessian soldiers, charged with participating in the rebellion, and taken to Darmstadt and then to Frankfurt. Here they were released and soon reached Bingen, where they parted.

Marx, believing that it was now impossible to engage in any serious work in Germany and anticipating major revolutionary events in France, left for Paris with the mandate of the Democratic Central Committee. Engels, on his part, returned to Kaiserslautern (Palatinate) to take up “the only position that the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* could take up in this movement: that of soldier”.*

He resolutely refused the numerous offers of civilian and military posts since he had no desire to assume responsibility for the endless mistakes and blunders of the petty-bourgeois leadership. But his

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 187.

revolutionary temperament gave Engels no peace. At this time the volunteer corps headed by August Willich was successfully besieging the Prussian fortress of Landau. It could have been captured without difficulty were it not for the absence of artillery. Day after day, Engels pestered the general staff in Kaiserslautern, insisting that howitzers should be sent to Willich, but without any result. This and a series of other interventions by Engels, his constant open and sharp criticism of the irresolute and unsuccessful actions of the local authorities, led in the long run to his being arrested in one of the border towns in the Palatinate. His arrest caused an explosion of anger among the advanced participants in the Palatinate movement and especially among the Rhine workers serving as volunteers in the Rhine-Hessian unit. After a 24-hour stay in his cell, on the order of the provisional government and with profuse apologies, he was set free.

Then, when the news came of the offensive launched by the counter-revolutionary Prussian troops, Engels joined Willich's volunteer corps.

He honourably discharged his duties as a soldier. Afterwards he proudly wrote that in the Palatinate-Baden army, the "most resolute Communists were also the most courageous soldiers". Above all, this could be said of Engels himself.

On June 13, Engels arrived in Offenbach, where Willich had his headquarters, and became his adjutant. Until the middle of July, when the Palatinate-Baden army was interned in Switzerland, he took part in all the actions fought by Willich's corps. It was not accidental that this unit was a crack force, for it contained many workers, men who displayed excellent discipline. To the lot of this corps fell the difficult and dangerous mission of cover-

ing the retreat of the Baden army, and parrying the blows of the advancing Prussians.

Engels quickly demonstrated his brilliance as organiser who feared neither work nor danger. He vigorously tackled the job of finding powder, lead, cartridges, muskets, clothing and food. He was among those who took an active part in training the soldiers. During the military engagements he was always in the line of fire; he took part in four actions including the one at Rastatt. "A long time afterwards," wrote Eleanor Marx, "all who saw him in battle still spoke of his extraordinary coolness and absolute scorn of danger." *

On July 12, Willich's corps, and with it Engels, crossed the Swiss frontier. This was the last unit of the defeated Palatinate-Baden army to leave German soil.

Defeat of the uprising in Southern and Western Germany also signified the final defeat of the German revolution of 1848-49.

Parties and classes, different theories and political platforms were put to the test in the revolutionary events of 1848-49. The revolution, while delivering a mortal blow to all varieties of pre-Marxian, utopian socialism, demonstrated the superiority of the scientific theory of the proletariat. "The new theory was splendidly confirmed by the course of the revolutionary events of 1848-49, just as it has been subsequently confirmed by all proletarian and democratic movements in all countries of the world." **

Until 1848 Marx and Engels devoted their main attention to laying the philosophical foundations of scientific communism, whereas in the course of the revolutionary battles of 1848-49, political ideas and questions of strategy and tactics came to the fore.

* *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 185.

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 48.

As Lenin repeatedly stressed, the tactics of Marx and Engels in the revolution of 1848-49 were the only correct ones, and the fact that they did not lead to victory of revolution is explained by the specific features of “that epoch in world history when the revolutionary character of the bourgeois democrats was *already* passing away (in Europe), while the revolutionary character of the socialist proletariat had *not yet* matured.” *

The revolutions of 1848-49 were more than just a test of Marxism in action, but also a rich source of experience for its further development.

VI. Summing up the Lessons of the Revolutions

From the beginning of June, when Marx left Germany for Paris, the two friends lost contact with each other for more than two months. Marx was extremely anxious about Engels, knowing that he would go to the most dangerous places. Engels, for his part, was no less anxious about his friend. In the first letter which he sent from Switzerland to Marx's wife (July 25, 1849), he wrote with the greatest alarm: "If only I could be sure that Marx is at liberty! I have often thought that, in the midst of the Prussian bullets, my post was much less dangerous than that of others in Germany and especially Marx's in Paris. So dispel my uncertainty soon." *

A reply came from Marx himself. "I have suffered a great deal of anxiety on your account," he wrote, "and was truly delighted when yesterday I received a letter in your hand." In the same letter Marx said: "You now have the best opportunity to write a history of or a pamphlet on the Baden-Palatinate revolution.... It would be a splendid chance for you to define the position of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* vis-à-vis the democratic party generally." **

Marx's suggestion fully coincided with the intentions of Engels himself, and he immediately took to his pen. Soon the pamphlet entitled *The Campaign for the German Imperial Constitution* was ready. In this pamphlet, Engels described in striking and

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, Moscow, 1982, p. 204.

** *Ibid.*, p. 207.

vivid form, with the greatest skill, step by step, the armed struggle in Rhenish Prussia, Baden and the Palatinate in May-July 1849, analysed the background, the course of the struggle for the Imperial Constitution, and gave an astonishingly accurate characterisation of the position taken by the different classes and parties.

The workers, and in many places the peasantry as well, he wrote, were ready to fight for the Imperial Constitution, "but under the condition, admittedly unspoken but perfectly understood by all parties, that after victory the petty bourgeois would have to defend this same Imperial Constitution against these same workers and peasants".*

Describing the armed struggle in Western and Southern Germany not as an idle observer but as an active participant, Engels with unconcealed scorn denounced the petty-bourgeois leaders who headed the movement and who doomed it. In detail, step by step, he analysed the military operations and showed how the armed uprising should not be led. The Marxist theory of armed uprising, the elaboration of which Engels initiated in his articles on the June battles of the Paris workers and the revolutionary struggle in Hungary, was taken a step further in this pamphlet.

Towards the end of August 1849, Engels received a letter from Marx who informed him that he was being banished from Paris to a swampy locality in Brittany, in the Morbihan Department. Having no desire to facilitate what was a masked attempt on his life, Marx decided to leave France. Announcing his decision to go to London, where he hoped to start a German newspaper, he wrote: "So you must leave for London at once. In any case your safety demands it. The Prussians would shoot you twice over: 1) because of Baden, 2) be-

* *Ibid.*, Vol. 10,
p. 151.

cause of Elberfeld. And why stay in a Switzerland where you can do nothing?

"You will have no difficulty in coming to London, whether under the name of Engels or under the name of Mayer.... I count on this *absolutely*.... In London we shall get down to business." *

Engels willingly fell in with his friend's advice. Since he could not go either via Germany or France, where he risked being arrested, he left for Italy. On October 6, he left Genoa on a sailing ship and arrived in London in the middle of November.

In London, the two friends resumed their joint revolutionary work. Conditions were now extremely difficult. Reaction was in the saddle everywhere. Among the less stable political exiles appeared evidence of despair, dismay, and loss of confidence in the cause. In this situation, too, Marx and Engels demonstrated their best qualities as leaders of the revolutionary proletariat. Their staunchness, firmness of character, and unflagging optimism, based on profound, scientifically-grounded confidence in their cause, made themselves felt with renewed force.

They took upon themselves the job of reforming and reorganising the Communist League. Its members, who took an active part in the movement, were now either arrested or dispersed. Contact was broken and for this reason and because of the fear that letters would be opened, correspondence was impossible for some time.

Thanks, however, to the vigorous work undertaken by Marx, the Central Committee of the League was reorganised in September 1849, and Engels was co-opted to it the moment he arrived in London. Soon, practically all the old leading figures of the League gathered around the two friends. New forces, too, made their appearance,

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 38, p. 213.

among them Willich, with whom Engels had shared the Baden-Palatinate campaign, Conrad Schramm and Wilhelm Liebknecht.


The founding of an independent proletarian party was impossible without overcoming the influence of the petty-bourgeois refugees who tried to organise the revolutionary exiles under their leadership. In contrast to these efforts, Marx and Engels worked for a special independent organisation of proletarian revolutionaries.

An important place in their work at that time was occupied by the activity launched on their initiative in the Social-Democratic Refugee Committee organised by the German Workers' Educational Society in London. They also utilised this work to extend the influence of the proletarian party, combating all the attempts of the leaders of the petty-bourgeois democrats to seize the leadership.

For the purpose of establishing contact with Germany, the Central Committee sent Heinrich Bauer there on a special mission in March 1850. Bauer took with him the "Address of the Central Authority to the League", which had been drawn up by Marx and Engels. In this programme document they summed up the main results of the revolution of 1848-49 in Germany, concretised the tactical line of the Communists in the future revolutionary battles, and formulated in detail their idea of permanent revolution.

The "Address" emphasised that during the revolutionary years, members of the Communist League had always been in the front ranks of the proletariat, that sole consistently revolutionary class, and that the political platform of the League was the only correct one. But the League's previously strong organisation had now been greatly





weakened. In a number of localities its branches had fallen under the influence of the petty-bourgeois democratic party. In the coming German revolution, Marx and Engels pointed out, the workers' party should be more organised and united, and should act independently.

The petty-bourgeois democrats, the "Address" went on, would play the same treacherous role that the German liberal bourgeoisie played in 1848. At present, it said, the petty bourgeoisie were preaching unity with the proletariat and sought to bring it into a single large opposition party under their leadership. Resolute war must be declared against these attempts. The workers must form their own independent secret and public organisation of the workers' party, and make each community the central point and nucleus of workers' associations.* The attitude of the revolutionary workers' party to the petty-bourgeois democrats should be the following: fight together with them against the common enemy; oppose them in all cases when they try to consolidate their position. Whereas the democratic petty bourgeoisie seek to restrict the revolution to reforming the existing social system in their own interests, preserving its base— wage slavery, "it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, [until] the proletariat has conquered state power.... For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only its annihilation, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of existing society but the foundation of a new one."**

With these tasks in view, the workers must, alongside the new petty-bourgeois official government that would be formed in the event of a victo-

rious revolution, "establish their own revolutionary workers' governments" whether in the form of municipal councils, workers' clubs or workers' committees, that would constantly supervise the official government. These embryos of revolutionary proletarian government would be a serious force since they would be backed by the whole mass of the workers.

To successfully counter the treacherous policy of the petty-bourgeois democrats, the workers must be armed and organised as an independent proletarian guard. Lastly, it was necessary to combat the attempts of the petty-bourgeois democrats to attach the peasant masses to themselves by means of spurious reforms. The workers must demand that the confiscated feudal property be made "state property and be converted into workers' colonies cultivated by the associated rural proletariat with all the advantages of large-scale agriculture." ***

In contrast to the petty-bourgeois democrats who advocated a federative republic with the greatest possible independence for the communities and provinces, the workers must strive for a single and indivisible German republic, and achieve the strictest centralisation of strength in the hands of the state.

The workers must endeavour to advance the revolution as much as possible. "Their battle cry must be: the Revolution in Permanence." ****

The idea of permanent revolution set forth in the "Address" was a tremendous step forward in the elaboration of a scientifically grounded Marxist strategy and tactics.

The strenuous work carried out by Marx and Engels to re-establish and reorganise the Communist League soon yielded results. In the second "Address of the Central Authority to the League",

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 10, p. 282.

** *Ibid.*, p. 281.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 285.

**** *Ibid.*, p. 287.

written in June 1850, they, on behalf of the Central Authority, were able to report substantial successes of the League.

While working to found a mass proletarian party in Germany, the two friends simultaneously rallied the best revolutionary elements in the international working-class movement. The second "Address" pointed out that the Central Authority, through its special delegates, had established contact with the genuine revolutionary parties of the French, British and Hungarians.

Engels took a particularly active part in rallying the proletarian revolutionaries on an international scale. He frequently addressed international gatherings in London and maintained close contact with the revolutionary Chartists. From December 1849 to August 1850, Engels published in their monthly, *The Democratic Review*, two series of unsigned articles: *Letters from France* and *Letters from Germany*, as well as a précis of the first chapter of Marx's work on the class struggles in France in 1848 and 1849.

Marx and Engels devoted much time and energy to the preparation of a new periodical. Six numbers of this periodical—*Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-ökonomische Revue*—appeared in 1850. It was edited by Marx and printed in Hamburg. It contained among other materials a number of works by Marx and Engels on the revolutions of 1848-49 in France and Germany, and also their international reviews.

As can be seen from the reviews printed in the March and May issues, the two leaders still hoped for a new upsurge of the revolution. But by the autumn of 1850 they realised that the objective situation had changed considerably and that the hopes for a speedy onset of revolution were

groundless. The industrial crisis of 1847, which had paved the way for the 1848 revolution, had run its course and gave place to an industrial boom. Marx and Engels demonstrated this clearly and definitely in the third international review written by them for No. 5-6.

“With this general prosperity,” they wrote, “in which the productive forces of bourgeois society develop as luxuriantly as is at all possible within bourgeois relationships, there can be no talk of a real revolution.... *A new revolution is possible only in consequence of a new crisis. It is, however, just as certain as this crisis.*”*

Soberly assessing the new objective conditions, Marx and Engels with all the sharpness, straightforwardness and courage of genuine proletarian leaders insisted on revising the tactics of the party. The revolutionary storms of 1848-49 had given place to a period of calm. Hence it was necessary to begin a long and gradual gathering of forces, preparing them systematically for the coming revolution, the date of which had been put off.

This new line of Marx and Engels encountered bitter opposition within the Communist League and in its Central Authority. Some Central Authority members, headed by Willich and Schapper, supported by a considerable number of the London members of the League, opposed Marx and Engels.

This was a “Left” opportunist faction, incapable of sustained proletarian struggle at a time when the revolutionary wave had subsided. It reflected the impatience which gripped the petty bourgeoisie, advocating either immediate revolution or, as Schapper put it, “going to sleep”. Ignoring the objective conditions, blind to the radical changes that had set in, and recklessly believing that revolution

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 10, p. 510.

could be “made” to order, they called for immediate insurrection. This was a harmful and dangerous “playing at revolution”, revolutionary prattle instead of serious revolutionary work.

Subjecting these voluntarist views of the Willich-Schapper faction to merciless criticism at a meeting of the Central Authority on September 15, 1850, Marx said:

“The materialist standpoint of the *Manifesto* has given way to idealism. The revolution is seen not as the product of realities of the situation but as the result of an effort of *will*. Whereas we say to the workers: You have 15, 20, 50 years of civil war to go through in order to alter the situation and to train yourselves for the exercise of power, it is said: We must take power *at once*, or else we may as well take to our beds.” *

In a bid to avert a split, Marx suggested transferring the powers of the Central Authority to the Cologne District Committee, and to form two districts in London, both answerable directly to the Central Authority. But the Willich-Schapper group chose to split away, forming its own Central Authority in London. After the split, it turned into a sect closely connected with petty-bourgeois émigrés. And since the German Workers’ Educational Society in London came under its influence, Marx and Engels were compelled to resign from it.

In the period of reaction and the low ebb of the workers’ movement, Marx and Engels had more time for theoretical work. In the first few years after the revolutions of 1848-49, they focused their attention on analysing the lessons of those revolutions and on summing up the new experience of revolutionary struggle. Marx devoted two works to this task — *The Class*

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 10, p. 626.

Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850,* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, while Engels wrote *The Campaign for the German Imperial Constitution*, *The Peasant War in Germany*, and *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*.

These works show strikingly that Marxism, as a living creative teaching, took shape and developed in indissoluble contact with revolutionary practice. Generalising the experience of the struggle of the proletariat and working masses in the stormy period of revolution when the activity, initiative and creative role of the masses in the historical process were manifested with particular force, Marx and Engels enriched their teaching with new and exceedingly important conclusions.

Elaborating on the doctrine of proletarian revolution, Marx for the first time used the classic term, "dictatorship of the proletariat", in his *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*.

In his *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), Marx, speaking about the old state machine, drew the conclusion of worldwide importance, that "all revolutions perfected this machine instead of breaking it."**

Quoting this, Lenin wrote:

"This conclusion is the chief and fundamental point in the Marxist theory of the state."***

Both in *The Class Struggles in France* and in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* Marx examined the reasons why the proletariat did not succeed in winning over the peasant masses with the result that it suffered defeat in the revolution. He pointed out that a correct understanding of the interests of the peasantry should bring it into an alliance with the urban proletariat: "The pea-

* When first published in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-ökonomische Revue*, this work was entitled "1848-1849". When it was republished in book form in 1895, Engels included in it passages about France by Marx, which had also appeared in that journal as part of the third international review, and gave it a new title, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*.

** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 186.

*** V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, Moscow, 1980, p. 411.

sants find their natural ally and leader in the *urban proletariat*, whose task is the overthrow of the bourgeois order.”* This exceedingly important political conclusion, drawn from the lessons of the revolutions of 1848-49, is developed by Marx in a letter to Engels dated April 16, 1856: “The whole thing in Germany will depend on whether it is possible to back the Proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasants’ War.”**

Understandable, too, is the close attention which Engels devoted to the peasant question. The last double number of the *Revue* (No. 5-6, November 1850) contained his historical work, *The Peasant War in Germany*.

Here, acting on the materialist conception of history, Engels examined the causes, progress and results of the Peasant War in Germany, the great anti-feudal uprising of the peasantry in 1525. Although he was dealing with a subject of the remote past, his study was far from being an “academic” investigation neglecting the storms and stresses of the modern political struggle. For Engels, his study was a means to reaffirm the importance of the peasantry for the class struggle and the necessity for the revolutionary proletariat to win leadership over the peasant masses. He used concrete historical examples from the class struggle of 1525 to illustrate the lessons of the revolutionary battles of 1848-49. The failure of the peasant rising, he pointed out, was due to the treacherous behaviour of the burghers— the predecessors of the modern bourgeoisie—and also to the political fragmentation and local particularism, which meant that instead of a nation-wide movement there were hundreds of local rebellions that were crushed

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 191.

** *Ibid.*, Vol. 40, Moscow, 1983, p. 41.

one at a time. He drew a picture of the strong personalities produced by the great Peasant War and reminded the German people of their revolutionary traditions.

"There was a time," Engels wrote, "when Germany produced characters that could match the best men in the revolutions of other countries, when the German people displayed an endurance and vigour which would in a centralised nation have yielded the most magnificent results, and when the German peasants and plebeians were full of ideas and plans that often make their descendants shudder." *

The results of the revolutionary battles of 1848-49 were also summarised in Engels's *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* (1851-52). Skilfully applying the method of historical materialism, and with profound knowledge and understanding of the events in which he himself had participated, Engels, on the heels of the German revolution of 1848-49, made a brilliant analysis of its causes, motive forces and main stages, the international situation and the lessons and results of the revolution.

Engels devoted an important place here to the armed uprising. The lessons which Engels drew from the experience of the armed struggle and which he summarised in *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* have forever become a part of the scientific proletarian strategy and tactics.

The work contained a classical formulation of the Marxist teaching on insurrection as an art and pointed with precision to the basic "rules" of insurrection: "Now, insurrection is an art quite as much as war or any other, and subject to certain rules of proceeding, which, when neglected, will produce the ruin of the party neglecting them.... Firstly, never play with insurrection unless you are fully

* *Ibid.*, Vol. 10,
p. 399.

prepared to face the consequences of your play.... Secondly, the insurrectionary career once entered upon, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising; it is lost before it measures itself with its enemies. Surprise your antagonists while their forces are scattered, prepare new successes, however small but daily; keep up the moral ascendant which the first successful rising has given to you; rally thus those vacillating elements to your side which always follow the strongest impulse, and which always look out for the safer side; force your enemies to a retreat before they can collect their strength against you.” *

Before launching an insurrection the political and military situation should be soberly weighed. But once the decision to launch the insurrection has been taken and preparations for it have begun, it is necessary to treat insurrection as an art, to act with the greatest determination and daring, and to maintain the offensive spirit.

Engels's brilliant thoughts about insurrection as an art are regarded as a most important part of the Marxist doctrine on proletarian revolution.

Along with theoretical work, Marx and Engels continued to rally, educate and train proletarian revolutionaries.

The Communist League fell upon hard times after the split of September 1850. The disorganising activity of Willich and Schapper and their supporters was supplemented by police repressions. In May and June 1851, a number of members of the Cologne Central Authority and other prominent League members were arrested in Germany. Through the agency of police provocateurs, the government began to prepare a sensational frame-up of the arrested Communists.

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 11, pp. 85-86.

Engels plunged into the vigorous activity launched by Marx in connection with the forthcoming trial. In articles in English and German newspapers they exposed the provocations, forgeries and other machinations of Prussian police agent Stieber, and supplied materials and documents to aid the defence.

At this time the two friends were subjected to foul attacks by the Willich-Schapper group and the petty-bourgeois exiles associated with them.

In May and June 1852, they wrote the pamphlet *The Great Men of the Exile*,* in which they retaliated with devastating criticism of the leaders of the petty-bourgeois exiles in London who engaged in wretched bluster and bluff instead of real revolutionary activity.

The trial of the eleven members of the Communist League took place in Cologne in October-November 1852; seven were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. With a view to exposing the foul methods to which the Prussian government resorted in condemning the Cologne Communists, Marx wrote a pamphlet, *Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne*, while Engels wrote an article for the *New-York Daily Tribune* on the same subject, entitled "The Late Trial in Cologne".

The arrests of Communists in Germany and the subsequent trial were a deadly blow to the Communist League. Its London District, headed by Marx and Engels, lost contact with the Continent. For all practical purposes, the League had ceased to exist. On November 17, 1852, at Marx's suggestion, the League announced its dissolution.

Although reaction was triumphant and the Communist League had ceased to exist, it left a deep trace in the history of the working-class

* This satirical pamphlet was never published during the lifetime of its authors.

movement as the first political organisation of the proletariat, as an organisation which had proclaimed the principles of scientific communism as its ideological guideline, and was the first to merge Marxism with the working-class movement. The activity of Marx and Engels in the Communist League was one of the most vivid chapters in their drive to create a proletarian party.

VII. The Period of Reaction and the New Rise of the Democratic and Proletarian Movements

The onslaught launched by the reactionaries made it extremely difficult for Marx and Engels to continue their theoretical studies and political work. They suffered all the miseries of exile and poverty. Bourgeois society took revenge on the leaders of the proletariat, depriving them of elementary means of subsistence. Marx, burdened with a family, experienced especially grave difficulties. The precarious existence of a proletarian journalist at a time when a working-class press was almost non-existent would have destroyed Marx's genius. It would have prevented him from pursuing his theoretical and political work and, what is more, would have doomed him and his family to death from starvation.

In these circumstances, the only way in which Engels could help his friend was to go back to his office, to the "accursed commerce". Without a murmur and without heroics, Engels did so—there was no other way. Just as naturally, Marx accepted this proof of his friend's self-sacrifice. In effect, they were now, as previously, fighting together for the cause to which they had dedicated their lives. The new conditions forced them merely to modify their division of labour. Engels, who always acknowledged the primacy of his friend and revered his genius, now considered it perfectly natural to assume a large measure of responsibility for the welfare of Marx and his family, enabling him to continue his highly important theoretical re-

search and political work. As Lenin wrote, "had it not been for Engels's constant and selfless financial aid, Marx would not only have been unable to complete *Capital* but would have inevitably been crushed by want".* Marx likened his friendship with Engels to that of Orestes and Pylades.

In November 1850, Engels returned to Manchester and his desk in the Ermen and Engels firm. Engels's return to office work and Marx's studies in the British Museum made them the targets of a stream of falsehoods and slanders on the part of the petty-bourgeois exiles who continued to toy with "European committees" and "provisional governments". We know from Marx's correspondence with Engels, for instance, that Ruge, Willich and others resorted to foul abuse of the two friends who, it was alleged, were now "alone, abandoned by all"; they even abused Engels for being a "trader". But the conviction that he was doing his duty protected him from their pinpricks; he restrained Marx who, goaded by the insults, was rearing for battle; Engels counselled his friend to ignore the emigrant "school of slander and meanness", to ignore the attacks, saying, "We, thank God, have come through worse". He believed that by helping Marx to continue his work on *Capital* he was doing much more for the victory of revolution than all the petty-bourgeois revolutionary phrasemongers taken together.

Nevertheless, Engels longed for the day when he would be rid of the hateful "sordid work at the office". He thought that the industrial boom would soon give way to a crisis that would be followed by another wave of revolution.

The letters of this extraordinary "businessman" are, in a way, a most passionate expectation of another crisis. And when that crisis finally broke

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, Moscow, 1977, p. 48.

out in 1857, Engels wrote to Marx that he felt fine in the midst of the general confusion. "Physically," he wrote, "the crisis will do me as much good as a bathe in the sea".*

But the hope of the crisis being followed by an outbreak of revolution that would again summon him and his friend to their revolutionary posts, did not materialise. It turned out that his work in the Manchester firm was to drag on for the best part of twenty years. Joining the firm initially as a commercial correspondent, he put the inheritance he received upon his father's death into it in 1864, and became a partner.

Marx's daughter Eleanor, who often visited Engels, recollected later: "It is terrible to think that ... a man like Engels had to spend twenty years in that way. Not that he ever complained or murmured. Far from it! He was as cheerful and composed at his work as though there was nothing in the world like 'going to the shop' or sitting in the office." **

The nature of his employment forced Engels to mix with people with whom he had little in common, to observe outward etiquette — in a word, to lead a double life. He had a place in the central part of the city to receive his business acquaintances, and his father and brothers during their visits from Germany. But most of his time he spent in a modest cottage in the outskirts, which he shared with his wife, Mary Burns, and to which he was "at liberty to retreat". as Marx put it, "from the human imbroglio".***

Here Engels met his Manchester friends—Wilhelm Wolff, who earned his living by giving private lessons, the English lawyer Samuel Moore, the well-known German self-taught chemist Karl Schorlemmer, the German physician Eduard Gumpert, and the Left Chartists. Sometimes he

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 40, Moscow, 1983, p. 203.

** *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 185.

*** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, Moscow, 1985, p. 443.

was visited by Georg Weerth, Ernst Dronke, Peter Imandt, and other Communist League members and comrades of the 1848-49 revolution.

The devoted and loving Mary Burns was a powerful support and comfort to Engels during the dark days. Her death from a heart attack on January 6, 1863, was a loss which weighed heavily on him. "One can't live with a woman for years on end," he wrote to Marx, "without being fearfully affected by her death. I felt as though with her I was burying the last vestige of my youth."*

In 1864 came another fearful blow. His close friend Wilhelm Wolff died. Marx dedicated the first volume of his *Capital* to Wolff's memory.

Despite the fact that Marx and Engels lived apart in different cities for twenty years, their remarkable alliance grew stronger with the passage of time. True, they frequently regretted that now they were no longer able to "live together, work together and laugh together". Marx's journeys to Manchester and Engels's to London could not be very frequent. They made up for this, however, by maintaining a lively correspondence. And if, for example, Engels delayed replying, the anxious Marx immediately queried: "Dear Engels, are you laughing, are you weeping, are you waking, are you sleeping?"**

But it was thanks to the fact that Marx and Engels had lived at a considerable distance from each other for many years and were forced to exchange thoughts chiefly in letters that their vast correspondence has come down to us, as a kind of creative laboratory.

Every aspect of science and politics is touched upon in these letters. Philosophy and natural science, political economy and socialism, history and linguistics, mathematics and technology, military

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 41, p. 446-47.

** *Ibid.*, Vol. 40,
p. 102.

matters and literature—they are all discussed in the letters of these universally knowledgeable men in a way that sometimes a single phrase or sentence supplies the key to a genuinely scientific understanding of a whole complex of questions. Not only science, but matters affecting working-class politics, the strategy and tactics of the class struggle, the struggle for a proletarian party—are all reflected in their correspondence. It is a rich source for studying the economics, foreign policy, and working-class movement of their times.

Lenin wrote: "If one were to attempt to define in a single word the focus, so to speak, of the whole correspondence, the central point at which the whole body of ideas expressed and discussed converges—that word would be *dialectics*. The application of materialist dialectics to the reshaping of all political economy from its foundations up, its application to history, natural science, philosophy and to the policy and tactics of the working class—that was what interested Marx and Engels most of all, that was where they contributed what was most essential and new, and that was what constituted the masterly advance they made in the history of revolutionary thought."*

Another splendid feature of the letters that Marx and Engels wrote to each other is their spirit—cheerful, militant, full of the joy of living. However viciously they were attacked by their enemies, however wanton the lies and slanders showered upon them in the capitalist press, and however petty and exhausting the fight they had had to lead for their livelihood, their sense of humour, cheerful spirits, and irrepressible willpower never deserted them.

Rereading the letters when going through Marx's papers after his death, Engels wrote to Johann Philipp Becker: "I relived the old times and

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, Moscow, 1977, p. 554.

the many happy moments which our enemies so plentifully afforded us. Often, when going over the old times, I laughed myself to tears. Our enemies were never able to deprive us of our humour.” *

When a literary hack enlarged in an article about the late “wretched Marx”, Engels responded in the following terms: “Maybe some day when I feel in the mood I shall make it hot for him. If these asses had the opportunity to read the correspondence between Moor and myself they would be astounded. Heine’s poetry is child’s play compared with our audacious and sprightly prose. Moor could be angry, but whine — never.” **

The correspondence of the two men contains a wealth of material that identifies them as theoreticians and working-class leaders, as two most remarkable men of their times — men of powerful mind, tremendous energy, moral purity, and nobly magnanimous character. Lastly, the correspondence alone gives us the complete picture of the constant, grim and wearying struggle which Marx waged in order to keep the wolf from the door, and also a complete picture of Marx’s selfless and devoted friend — Frederick Engels.

When serving in the firm as a clerk, for which the remuneration was meagre, Engels was not in a position to give much help to his friend. Meanwhile, Marx, battling grimly against poverty, was unable to furnish his family even with the bare necessities. Landlord, shopkeepers and other creditors with whom he found himself constantly “at war” were pressing for payment. Poverty claimed from his family victim after victim. After the death of two of his children, Guido and Franziska, came the especially painful loss of a third, that of eight-year-old Edgar, a wonderful boy and the family favourite, whom the Marxes called Musch, the little

* Marx, Engels,
Werke, Bd. 36,
S. 28-29.

** *Ibid.*, S. 36.

sparrow. Together with the boy's father, Engels experienced the anguish of watching the failing health of the boy, and did everything to save him. Writing to his friend about his son's illness, Marx said: "I cannot thank you enough for the kindness with which you have worked in my stead, and for the sympathy you have shown towards the child."*

After the funeral, Marx wrote to Engels:

"I've already had my share of bad luck but only now do I know what real unhappiness is....

"Amid all the fearful torments I have recently had to endure, the thought of you and your friendship has always sustained me, as has the hope that there is still something sensible for us to do together in the world."**

His inability to rid the Marx family of their privations was a source of agony to Engels. And when at last the opportunity came in the shape of journalistic work to give Marx extra financial help, he seized it eagerly. It so happened that in August 1851, Marx received an offer of work from the *New-York Daily Tribune*, a progressive newspaper. This augured not only an income, but also an opportunity to at least indirectly influence public opinion in the proletarian party's interests. Giving his consent, Marx turned at once for help to Engels. "As to the *New-York Tribune*," he wrote to him, "you've got to help me, now that I'm so busy with political economy. Write a series of articles on Germany, from 1848 onwards."*** Engels wasted no time. He supplied Marx with article after article, which the latter immediately despatched to the paper. Such was the origin of the famous series of articles *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*. Only after the publication of the correspondence was it established that this work came from Engels's pen. Later, too, articles written by

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, pp. 529-30.

** *Ibid.*, p. 533.

*** *Ibid.*, Vol. 38, p. 425.

Engels appeared in the paper either under Marx's name or without any by-line at all, as editorials.

In addition to writing a large number of articles for the *New-York Tribune*, Engels helped Marx by translating his articles into English (Marx had not fully mastered English at the time). Of the many articles sent by Marx to the New York paper, about one-third were by Engels. Here, too, we see the division of labour established between them. Engels wrote chiefly on military matters, Marx on foreign policy, economics and on England.

The fees for these articles were, alas, extremely small. Charles Dana, the *Tribune* editor, treated his correspondent as any capitalist owner would, nibbling away at his salary and finally putting him on half-pay. Again, Marx's financial condition deteriorated.

Then, just when things were blackest, Dana suggested that Marx should collaborate on *The American Cyclopaedia* which he (Dana) was putting out. Although the work, or at any rate the greater part of it, was anything but interesting, Engels agreed, since it would help out Marx financially. Busy at his office desk during the day, he devoted his evenings to the encyclopaedia.

Nor was Engels's help confined to journalistic work only. Marx turned to his friend for advice on a variety of theoretical problems and always received detailed, carefully considered and at times specially prepared answers, many of which Marx incorporated whole in his articles.

This help was reciprocated. Marx shared his views on theoretical matters in which Engels was interested, often spending days in the British Museum searching for material needed by Engels on military matters, history, literature, linguistics, and so on.

During his stay in Manchester, Engels made a special study of military science, a subject which first attracted him when he served as a volunteer gunner in Berlin. The revolutionary struggles of 1848-49 had impelled him to study military matters, and first and foremost the question of insurrection and revolutionary war. In Manchester, he pursued his study not just from time to time, but systematically and thoroughly.

This was partly explained by his desire to help Marx with the articles for the *New-York Tribune* and *The American Cyclopaedia*. But the chief thing that prompted him was the knowledge of the immense role which military matters would play in the coming revolution.

Whatever leisure he had was now devoted to this subject. Riding horseback, a favourite pastime from childhood, now took on a new meaning. His passion for steeplechases alarmed Marx, who feared he would injure himself. He counselled his friend: "Only don't take too many breakneck jumps, as there will soon be more important occasion for risking your neck." * In reply, Engels stressed that, for him, riding was the material basis for his military studies. "Anyway, *sois tranquille* [don't worry], if I break my neck it won't be by falling off a horse." **

An enemy of superficiality, Engels studied military matters not as an amateur or dilettante, but with the thoroughness of a man with an eye for detail, for the finer points, with the resolve to complete that which he had begun.

The number of Engels's articles and other works on military subjects is enormous. In 1853-56 he wrote a large series on the Crimean War (a war that France, Britain and Turkey had fought against Russia). Here Engels's attention was drawn

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 40, Moscow, 1983, p. 266.

** *Ibid.*, p. 268.

to ethnic relations in Turkey. He sided with the struggle of the Slav peoples against the Turkish yoke.

Looking into the military side of things, Engels criticised the conservatism of the British and French military systems, strategy and tactics. He was also highly critical of the Russian army command, demonstrating the backwardness of the Russian military establishment due to Russia's backward economy. But he praised the heroism of the Russian soldiers, especially that of the defenders of Sevastopol, the skill of the Russian military engineers, and the exemplary organisation of the city's defence.

The war fought by Turkey, Britain and France against Russia did not, as Marx and Engels had hoped, develop into a revolutionary war against tsarism.

In 1855, Engels contributed several articles to the American press on the potentials of the various European armies.

His interest was also focused on the colonial expansionism of the capitalist states and on the national liberation struggles of the peoples against colonialism.

In 1857-58, he wrote articles on the Second Opium War (waged by Britain and France with a view to enslaving China), on the national liberation uprising against British rule in India (1857) and on the British invasion of Persia. The articles Marx and Engels wrote about India and China, together with their appraisal of the national problem in Europe, laid the basis for the revolutionary internationalist proletarian policy in the national-colonial question.

Writing about events in China and India (and in most of the articles on military subjects), Engels by

no means confined himself to purely military analysis. The character and tone of these articles showed that they were written not so much by a "military expert" as by a proletarian revolutionary. For example, the articles on the Indian Mutiny, in addition to skilful analysis of the military operations, contained an indictment of British colonial rule.

Engels looked upon the fate of the African peoples and their national liberation struggles against colonialists with close attention and deep sympathy. He used the example of the French conquest of Algeria to expose the cruelties of colonial rule and its grave consequences for the enslaved. He was gratified to note that despite thirty years of bitter warfare, the ruling classes of France had not succeeded in squashing the Algerian resistance. "The tribes," he wrote, "still assert their independence and detestation of the French regime." *

Colonialism was also treated in Engels's articles on Afghanistan and Persia.

Both Marx and Engels responded to all major international developments. In 1859, more than twenty articles by Engels appeared in the *New-York Daily Tribune* and in *Das Volk*, a German paper published in London, on the subject of the war fought by France and Piedmont against Austria. The following year, the Spanish war in Morocco and Garibaldi's revolutionary campaigns in Southern Italy were the subjects of another series in the New York paper. The year 1861 saw Engels helping Marx with the latter's articles on the American Civil War for the Vienna *Die Presse*. He wrote for an English military journal in 1860-62, and for a German military newspaper in 1860-64. Articles came from his pen on the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, and a further series on the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. In addition to these,

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 18, p. 69.

Marx and Engels wrote 67 entries on military topics for *The New American Cyclopaedia*. Most of these, including such major entries as "Army", "Artillery", "Cavalry", "Infantry", "Fortifications" and "Navy", were all by Engels.

Reading them one is astonished by Engels's erudition, the deep-going theoretical analysis and the wealth of facts. That the reading public attributed them (they were usually unsigned) to an outstanding military expert, was not at all surprising.

Marx commended his friend's military knowledge, and declared that he relied wholly on the "war ministry in Manchester" which could at a moment's notice supply him with information on any military question.

Engels was the first military expert of the revolutionary proletariat, its first military theoretician. His keen grasp of politics and economics, his knowledge of international relations and, above all, his brilliant mastery in materialist dialectics — all this enabled him to approach war as a social phenomenon, determined by the level of the productive forces, the state of the economy, the course of social development, and the class struggle.

In his *Anti-Dühring* he formulated the Marxist concept of war and military art.

"Nothing," he wrote, "is more dependent on economic prerequisites than precisely army and navy. Armament, composition, organisation, tactics and strategy depend above all on the stage reached at the time in production and on communications. It is not the 'free creations of the mind' of generals of genius that have had a revolutionising effect here, but the invention of better weapons and the change in the human material, the soldiers; at the very most, the part played by generals of genius is limited to adapting methods of fighting to the

new weapons and combatants.” * It was from this standpoint that in *Anti-Dühring* he traced the historical development of the art of war.

In the same book he predicted that the growth of militarism after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 would strain to breaking point all the antagonisms of capitalist society, with the result that the army, hitherto an instrument of the ruling classes, became a powerful factor in the victorious proletarian revolution. “The army,” he wrote, “has become the main purpose of the state, and an end in itself; the peoples are there only to provide soldiers and feed them. Militarism dominates and is swallowing Europe. But this militarism also bears within itself the seed of its own destruction. Competition among the individual states forces them, on the one hand, to spend more money each year on the army and navy, artillery, etc., thus more and more hastening their financial collapse; and, on the other hand, to resort to universal compulsory military service more and more extensively, thus in the long run making the whole people familiar with the use of arms, and therefore enabling them at a given moment to make their will prevail against the warlords in command. And this moment will arrive as soon as the mass of the people — town and country workers and peasants — *will have* a will. At this point the armies of the princes become transformed into armies of the people; the machine refuses to work and militarism collapses by the dialectics of its own evolution.” **

The prolific military writings that Engels left us retain their validity to this day.

During his Manchester days, Engels studied languages in addition to military science. They had attracted him from boyhood. Now he made a systematic study of linguistics and achieved truly asto-

* Marx, Engels.
Collected Works,
Vol. 25, Moscow,
1987, pp. 154-55.
** *Ibid.*, p. 158.

nishing results. Here, too, he was motivated not only by scientific interests, but also by the requirements of the international revolutionary task of the present and future.

He had a fluent command of the principal European languages, and was at home in Latin and Greek. Then, in 1850, he began, as he himself put it, with love and thoroughness to study the Russian language.

An idea of the scrupulousness and interest with which he studied the Russian language and literature can be inferred from the fact that found among his papers was a translation into German of fifteen stanzas from *Eugene Onegin*, a poem by the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin. Notes he made while reading Pushkin's *Bronze Horseman* and Griboyedov's comedy *Wit Works Woe* have likewise been found.

Engels read the works of Saltykov-Shchedrin, a Russian writer of satire, and those of the Russian democrat revolutionaries Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov, and others. He acquainted himself with Sir John Bowring's Russian anthology, making extensive notes on Lomonosov, Derzhavin, Sumarokov, Kheraskov, Bogdanovich, Zhukovsky, Karamzin, Krylov and other Russian writers and scholars of the 18th and early 19th centuries. At his request, Marx ordered for him a copy of the German translation of the *Lay of Igor's Host* (with the Russian original).

The Russian language, he wrote subsequently, fully merits study "both for its own sake, as one of the richest and most powerful living languages, and on account of the literature thereby made accessible."^{*}

Engels's growing interest in the Eastern question spurred him to study Persian. Towards the end of

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 18, S. 545.

the 1850s he turned to the old German languages, while the Danish War of 1864 and the Schleswig-Holstein conflict whetted his interest in the Scandinavian languages.

At the end of the 1860s, when the Irish question became the subject of keen debate in the First International, the indefatigable Engels tackled Gaelic. He laboured over Dutch-Frisian and the Scottish dialects. And in his declining years, Engels began to study Romanian and Bulgarian.

A polyglot, Engels spoke and wrote freely in twelve languages and read in almost twenty. His linguistic knowledge was not confined to mere mastering the "technique" of languages. For Engels, learning a language meant study of its specific features, its origin and development in connection with the history of the given nation, its culture and literature.

His knowledge of languages enabled Engels to go into the general problems of language study and comparative linguistics, and to lay a solid Marxist foundation for the study of philology.


This knowledge served him in good stead when in the 1880s he began his study of the ancient Germans and work on his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. It was of inestimable help in his examination of the early phases of human development.

A summary of the Marxist views on the origin of language is contained in his unfinished essay begun in 1876, entitled *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*.

Closely linked with his linguistic labours was his study of world literature. In this sphere, too, Engels, one of the most knowledgeable men of his day, achieved amazing results. He was well versed in the literature of the European and Asian na-







tions, in modern literature and that of the preceding epochs.

Engels championed partisanship and truth in literature and art, and a realism which “implies, beside truth of detail, the truth in reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances”.*

Engels considered Honoré de Balzac the greatest of realists. “Balzac,” he wrote, “is in my opinion, after Cervantes, the greatest novelist of all time, and also the most truthful historian of the French society of 1815 to 1848. I like Balzac in all forms.”** From Balzac’s *Comédie Humaine*, Engels wrote in another letter, he had learned “more even in the sense of economic detail (e. g. about the redistribution of movable and immovable property after the revolution) than from the books of all the specialists— the historians, economists, and statisticians of that period — put together.”***

Engels harangued for realism, too, in his examination of Ferdinand Lassalle’s historical drama, *Franz von Sickingen*. In so doing, he formulated certain important principles of Marxist aesthetics. He advocated drama that would produce “the complete fusion of greater intellectual profundity, of a consciously historical content ... with Shakespearean vivacity and wealth of action.”**** He also criticised Lassalle for rating the national movement of the nobility higher than the plebeian and peasant movements.

Engels’s numerous observations in articles and letters are valuable as models of the Marxist approach to questions of literature and art.

Towards the end of the 1850s Engels turned to a detailed study of the natural sciences— chemistry, physics, biology, physiology, etc. These sciences, he observed, conclusively confirmed the dialectical view of the world. Were Hegel “today to

write a *Philosophy of Nature*," he remarked, "subjects would come flocking in on him from all directions." ***** Engels carefully followed the new discoveries in the natural sciences, and reacted with enthusiasm to Darwin's newly published *On the Origin of Species* (1859). "Never before has so grandiose an attempt been made to demonstrate historical evolution in Nature, and certainly never to such good effect," ***** he wrote.

Engels did not turn his back on practical revolutionary activity either, though it was distinctly limited on account of the widespread reaction and the low ebb of the workers' movement. Both Marx and Engels strove to maintain and strengthen their ties with their followers in other countries, to prompt them to study theory, and to prepare for new battles which, they hoped, were not too far distant.

Participation in the Chartist movement occupied an important place in Engels's revolutionary work during his early years in Manchester. After the dispersal of the demonstration in April 1848, the Chartist movement experienced a period of decline. The industrial expansion which made England the "workshop of the world", and the exploitation of vast colonies by the British capitalist class somewhat improved the condition of the skilled workers and favoured the emergence of opportunist sentiment in their midst. Some of the Chartist leaders adapted themselves, not without difficulty, to the changed situation with a view to reviving the movement, while others, headed by Feargus O'Connor, abandoned the Chartist programme and came to terms with the radical bourgeoisie.

Marx and Engels urged the Left Chartists, headed by Julian Harney and Ernest Charles Jones, to fight O'Connor's opportunist wing and to break with it. Matters were complicated by the fact that

■ Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 37, S. 42.

** Marx, Engels, *Works* (Russ. ed.), Vol. 50, Moscow, 1981, p. 473.

*** Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 37, S. 44.

**** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 40, p. 442.

***** *Ibid.*, p. 326.

***** *Ibid.*, p. 551.

Harney and Jones were not clear as to the tactics that should be employed in the prevailing situation. Marx and Engels tried to help the Lefts and pointed to the necessity for a close linkage between Chartism and socialism, for combining the political fight for the Charter with the workers' everyday economic struggles.

Engels contributed prolifically to the Chartist press—*Notes to the People* and *The People's Paper*—and engaged in propaganda and organising work among the Left Chartists in Manchester. In a letter to Marx dated January 8, 1851, he wrote: "I shall try to start up a small club with these fellows, or organise regular meetings to discuss the *Manifesto* with them." * A month later he informed his friend that he had succeeded in forming a new local Chartist organisation.

At first, Engels had greatly influenced Harney, but after the split in the Communist League the latter began a dual policy, manoeuvring between the various exile groups and flirting with their "great men"—Louis Blanc, Willich, and others, and distanced himself from Marx and Engels.

In a letter to Marx on February 13, 1851, Engels told him of Harney's coming visit to Manchester, and wrote: "I shall duly take him to task. It's about time he realised that we're in earnest with him." **

In reply, Marx gave an accurate description of Harney: "He has a twofold spirit, one inculcated by Frederick Engels, and one that is all his own. The former is for him a kind of strait-jacket. The latter is he himself in *puris naturalibus*." ***

Harney's attitude finally compelled Marx and Engels to break relations with him.

Thereafter Marx and Engels drew closer to Ernest Jones, the other leader of the Left Chartists, who worked vigorously to reorganise the move-

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 264.

** *Ibid.*, p. 289.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 295.

ment and at first eagerly followed their advice. Jones succeeded in launching his journal, *Notes to the People*, thanks largely to the aid given by Marx and Engels who furnished articles and helped raise funds. Marx also helped with the editing.

While doing all in their power to help revive Chartism on new lines, Marx and Engels had no illusions on this score. They realised that the movement was disintegrating into separate cliques, which were turning into appendages of the bourgeois radicals. In time, Jones, too, had to be dropped because he took the path of the Right Chartists and renounced the idea of an independent working-class movement.

Writing to Marx on October 7, 1858, Engels told him about Jones's new line for an alliance with the bourgeois Radicals and disclosed the reasons for the decline of the revolutionary working-class movement in Britain:

"There is in fact a connection between Jones's new move, seen in conjunction with previous more or less successful attempts at such an alliance, and the fact that the English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that the ultimate aim of this most bourgeois of all nations would appear to be the possession, *alongside* the bourgeoisie, of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat. In the case of a nation which exploits the entire world this is, of course, justified to some extent." *

* * *

The first world-wide economic crisis that began in 1857, gave impulse to a new rise of the national liberation and bourgeois-democratic movements in Europe, which had been crushed by the counter-revolution in 1848-49.

* Marx, Engels.
Collected Works,
Vol. 40, p. 344.

In a number of countries the unresolved questions of the bourgeois-democratic revolution made themselves felt with renewed force. With the development of capitalism in Germany and Italy, the task of forming unified national states became an acute necessity.

The question was how -- with what forces, what means, and in which way?

In Germany the national question came to the forefront in 1859 in connection with the war which Napoleon III (Louis Bonaparte) launched against Austria over Northern Italy. With a view to making it a "popular" war and to bolstering his tottering throne, Louis Bonaparte demagogically declared that he was fighting to liberate Italy from the Austrian yoke.

The war of France and Italy against Austria posed the question of Prussia's attitude and also of the ways of unifying Germany. In a pamphlet written at the time, Engels analysed the Italo-Austrian war from the standpoint of military strategy and also assessed it politically, defining the stand the German democrats should adopt in relation to it.

His pamphlet, *Po and Rhine* (1859), was a passionate call for the liberation of Italy; it denounced Bonaparte who, in the guise of champion of her freedom, sought to forge new chains for Italy. Engels showed that while waging war on the Po, Bonaparte was in reality aiming at the Rhine, i.e., getting ready to strike at Germany. Bonapartist France wanted her neighbour, Germany, to remain fragmentised politically and economically. He believed that it was necessary to oppose Bonaparte, that a war by Prussia against him would generate a broad popular movement which would sweep away the Prussian government and unite Germany "from below", by means of revolution.

This partisan political approach to the unification of Germany was skilfully worked into a piece on military strategy which, on Marx's advice, he published anonymously.

The next year, 1860, Engels published another, also anonymous, pamphlet under the title, *Savoy, Nice and the Rhine*, which, in its way, was a second instalment of *Po and Rhine*.

The stand taken by Marx and Engels in the Austro-Italo-French war gave rise to serious differences with Ferdinand Lassalle, with whom Marx had been in correspondence since 1848 and who repeatedly professed to be a supporter of Marx's party.

During the Austro-Italo-French war Lassalle had published a pamphlet entitled *The Italian War and the Task of Prussia* which, in substance, was directed against Engels's *Po and Rhine*. Lassalle held that Prussia should support France in the war, seeing, first, that France aimed at liberating Italy from an alien yoke, and, second, that Prussia would be able to defeat Austria — her old rival — and unite Germany under her own hegemony. If the Prussian government were to undertake this task, wrote Lassalle in his pamphlet, "German democracy itself would rally to the Prussian banner and sweep aside all the obstacles".*

As distinct from Marx and Engels, who consistently advocated revolutionary unification of Germany from below by means of a democratic republic, Lassalle, as we see, urged support for reactionary Prussia as the backbone of a united Germany.

Whereas Marx and Engels denounced Bonapartist France which sought to dominate Europe, and called upon the people of Italy to take the liberation and unification of the country into their own hands, Lassalle sowed illusions about Louis Bonaparte's "liberation mission" and, by so doing, sup-

* Lassalle, *Gesammelte Reden und Schriften*, Bd. 1, 1919, S. 112.

ported the predatory policy of the French emperor.

Marx and Engels opposed Lassalle's attitude. Marx wrote in a letter to Lassalle that his pamphlet "In no way corresponds with my own view or that of my party friends in England." *

The differences became more serious when Lassalle assumed the role of organiser and theoretician of the workers' party in Germany. The sharp constitutional conflict that erupted in Prussia between the bourgeois liberal Landtag deputies and the government over credits for reorganising the army, tended to enliven the bourgeois democratic and the workers' movements. The General Association of German Workers came into being in this setting in 1863, with Lassalle as its leader.

Engels wrote: "However highly one may estimate Lassalle's services to the movement, his historical role in it remains an equivocal one.... In his propagandist writings, the correct things that he borrowed from Marx are so much interwoven with Lassalle's own, invariably false expositions that the two are hardly to be separated." **

Lassalle's faulty thinking comes into evidence most distinctly in his approach to the crucial issue of the State.

Whereas the founders of scientific communism regarded the State in a society based on antagonistic classes as the organisation of the ruling class for subjugating the oppressed masses, Lassalle held that the function of the State was to educate and lead the human race towards freedom.

Lassalle counselled the workers to engage only in peaceful and legal forms of struggle. He believed that with the introduction of universal suffrage the State would become a "free people's State", guaranteeing not only equal rights but also material equality of all citizens. By means of government

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 40, p. 460.

** Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence,
Progress Publishers,
Moscow, 1982, pp. 406,
407.

aid in organising producers' associations this State would enable the "estate of workers to become their own employers". Thus, Lassalle propagated the harmful illusion that with the introduction of universal suffrage the Prussian State would help the workers to take over the means of production and abolish exploitation. He was opposed to class struggle, strikes, and trade unions.

To this fundamental difference in theory were added fundamental difference over tactics and policy. Marx made no bones about this, telling Lassalle that all they "had in common politically were a few remote objectives".*

In the view of Marx and Engels the national unification of Germany was to be achieved by a revolution in which the peasant masses would take part under the leadership of the working class, whereas for Lassalle the peasants and all non-proletarian strata were "one reactionary mass", and the peasant movement against landlords and feudal practices reactionary. Concerning this viewpoint, Engels wrote: "In a predominantly agricultural country like Prussia it is despicable to attack only the bourgeoisie in the name of the industrial proletariat, without even mentioning the brutal patriarchal exploitation of the rural proletariat by the big feudal aristocracy."**

Lassalle sided with Bismarck in his efforts to unite Germany "from above". When a constitutional crisis arose and Bismarck began to flirt with the proletariat in the hope of getting its support against the liberal bourgeoisie, Lassalle directly bargained with him and received a promise of universal suffrage.

Although Marx and Engels were not aware of the Bismarck-Lassalle talks, they could not but see Lassalle's hobnobbing with the Prussian landlords

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 400.

** *Ibid.*, Vol. 42, Moscow, 1987, p. 77.

and Bismarck's government, which prompted Engels to write about Lassalle: "The chap's now operating purely in the service of Bismarck."*

Their suspicions were confirmed when, after the death of Lassalle (he died on August 31, 1864, from a wound received in a duel), they learned of his last political designs. Liebknecht informed them that Lassalle had intended rallying the German workers behind Bismarck in the war against Denmark for the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein. In exchange for this, Lassalle hoped to get the promised universal suffrage. When he heard the news, Engels wrote to Marx: "It was the act of a scoundrel, the betrayal of the whole workers' movement to the Prussians."**

When Lassalle began his agitation among the German workers, Marx and Engels at first decided to wait and see, saying nothing against him publicly because at the time he was playing a positive role, helping the workers to shake off the influence of the bourgeois Party of Progress and to form their own organisation. Through their supporters—chiefly Wilhelm Liebknecht Marx and Engels endeavoured to influence the General Association of German Workers from within and help the workers take a correct stand. Upon learning of Lassalle's treachery they launched an open struggle against his followers. His views, however, had penetrated deeply into the working-class movement in Germany. A long struggle ensued against Lassalleanism, which, in effect, was the first evidence of opportunism in German Social-Democracy. The fight that Marx and Engels put up against the nationalist and opportunist Lassallean sect assumed particularly sharp forms at the time of the First International.

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 41, p. 478.

** *Ibid.*, Vol. 42,
p. 69.

VIII. The Period of the First International and the Paris Commune

The indefatigable work carried on by Marx and Engels for international unity of the proletariat, even at a time when reaction was rampant, culminated in 1864 in the founding of the International Working Men's Association known as the First International.

The conditions favoured the setting up of this mass international organisation of the proletariat.

The industrial crisis of 1857 stimulated a new rise of the working-class movement. The development of capitalism brought into relief the identical plight and destiny of proletarians in different countries. This was felt by the workers most distinctly during the crisis, when the bourgeoisie tried to make them bear the bulk of the burden. The workers retaliated with strikes, which the capitalists tried to break by importing foreign labour. Experience taught the workers that the offensive of the capitalists could be defeated by solidarity and joint action of proletarians in all lands.

The revival of the bourgeois-democratic, and more particularly, the national liberation movements at the end of the 1850s and the beginning of the 1860s, also contributed to the political awakening of the working class.

The workers mounted political as well as economic struggles. For instance, the French proletarians, disregarding the advice of the Proudhonists to refrain from politics, took to political forms of struggle on a growing scale.

Step by step, too, the German workers threw off the political influence of the bourgeoisie. Despite the Lassallean sectarian principles of the General Association of German Workers, experience brought home to the workers the necessity for trade unions and strikes, thereby paving the way for a workers' party different from the Lassallean.

The English proletariat, too, despite the stranglehold of Liberal trade unionism, moved into action. This was manifest in strikes, in political struggle for universal suffrage, and in the setting-up of the London Trades Council, which became the rallying centre of the newly awakened workers' movement. Even the Right-wing leaders of the English trade unions, preoccupied with purely economic struggles and benefit societies, began to realise the need for joint action by workers of different countries: the importing of foreign labour, a ruse to which the English capitalists frequently resorted to break strikes, was a good lesson.

A vivid expression of the international solidarity of the proletariat was the English workers' campaign in connection with the US Civil War. By their public demonstrations and protest meetings the workers prevented the ruling classes from intervening on the side of the Southern planters against the more progressive Northern states.

Even more striking was the international solidarity displayed by the proletariat during the Polish uprising of 1863-64. At numerous international gatherings the workers demonstrated their deep sympathy with the insurgents.

Marx saw the changed economic and political climate in the world and the new rise of the working-class movement, and came to the conclusion that the idea of international solidarity, for which he and Engels had fought so persistently, could

now be successfully put into effect. And so, on September 28, 1864, at an international gathering in St. Martin's Hall, London, the International Working Men's Association was founded. Later Engels wrote in reference to the meeting: "Among all the participants there was only one person who was clear as to what was to happen and what was to be founded: it was the man who had already in 1848 issued to the world the call: Working men of All Countries, Unite!"* In Marx, the burgeoning proletarian organisation had a brilliant leader and theorist.

The purpose of this organisation, as Marx saw it, was to help separate the working class from bourgeois democracy, aid the rise of an independent working-class movement, rid the workers of the influence of various socialist and semi-socialist sects and educate them in the spirit of consistent proletarian internationalism.

The difficulty of being the leader of the International Working Men's Association made itself felt from the outset: the workers' movement in different countries, varying widely in degree of organisation, had to be united; joint action by varied elements had to be organised; their sectarian and reformist tendencies had to be overcome, and the movement raised to a higher level.

It was not surprising, therefore, that in drawing up the first programme documents of the International—the Inaugural Address and Provisional Rules—Marx was beset with difficulties, concerning which he wrote to Engels: "It was very difficult to frame the thing so that our views should appear in a form that would make it acceptable to the present outlook of the workers' movement.... It will take time before the revival of the movement allows the old boldness of language to be used. We

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, S. 341

must be *fortiter in re, suaviter in modo*, [strong in deed, mild in manner].”*

And Marx coped with the task brilliantly. Without deviating one iota from his views, he drew up a programme which left the door of the International open alike to English trade unionists, French Proudhonists, and German Lassalleans.

In drafting the Inaugural Address and Provisional Rules he calculated that the practical experience of the masses, together with the struggle which he and Engels were waging against various petty-bourgeois views, would enable the workers to reach an understanding of scientific communism. And so, from the very outset, a systematic and persistent struggle was waged for Marxism’s ideological supremacy in the International.

Although Engels, still living in Manchester, was unable to participate directly in founding the International or in the work of its General Council he, nevertheless, effectively helped Marx in leading it and in combating bourgeois and petty-bourgeois trends in the working-class movement. Marx kept him informed about the state of affairs in the International Working Men’s Association and the struggle he was fighting in the General Council. He turned to Engels for advice on various matters and often asked him to prepare some document for the Council meetings. For example, Engels supplied a detailed paper concerning the miners’ unions in Saxony, which was published by the General Council in 1869 in the form of a report by Marx as its Corresponding Secretary for Germany.

Taking part in the controversies which were flaring up in the International, Engels wrote numerous articles upholding Marxism against its bourgeois and petty-bourgeois adversaries.

Marx found himself in conflict with the Proud-

* Marx, Engels.
Collected Works,
Vol. 42, p. 18.

honists immediately after the founding of the International. Proudhon's influence was still strong in France, Belgium and some other countries where small-scale, artisan production still prevailed. The petty-bourgeois views of Proudhon, who rejected political struggle and invented all kinds of fantastic schemes for ending misery without social revolution and abolition of privately-owned means of production, played a negative role in the workers' movement.

One of the first issues on which the Proudhonists challenged Marx in the International was Polish independence. They objected to this question being placed on the agenda for the 1866 Congress of the International (Geneva) on the grounds that it was a "political" matter and, therefore, of no concern to the workers. At Marx's request, Engels wrote a series of articles under the heading *What Have the Working Classes to Do with Poland?* Citing historical facts, Engels showed that wherever the working class had participated independently in political movements, it had always upheld the cause of Poland's independence and her emancipation from national oppression. He denounced the Proudhonists who, by ignoring the national question and refusing to help the Polish people, in practice supported the oppressive policy of Russian tsarism, Austria and Prussia. Engels's articles on Poland did their conspicuous bit for the IWMA's elaboration of the national question.

Simultaneously, Marx and Engels entered the lists against Lassallean traditions which were hindering the German workers from joining the international organisation of the proletariat. Shortly after the founding of the International, Marx and Engels were asked by Johann Baptist von Schweitzer, one of the leaders of the General Asso-

ciation of German Workers, to collaborate on the newspaper *Social-Demokrat* which would shortly be launched. Schweitzer's letter and the newspaper's prospectus in which the typical Lassalleian slogans were absent gave Marx and Engels grounds for believing that the paper could be used to propagate the ideas of the International in Germany, and they agreed to collaborate. As a beginning, Marx sent Schweitzer the text of the Inaugural Address. But already the first trial issues of the *Social-Demokrat* greatly alarmed Marx and Engels. True to the Lassalleian spirit, it flirted with Bismarck's Junker government. In an article on the death of Proudhon, Marx used the opportunity to denounce in the newspaper "even the semblance of compromise with the powers that be",* and characterised Proudhon's currying favour with Louis Bonaparte as "baseness".** Simultaneously, Engels supplied the paper with his own translation of an old Danish folk song, *Herr Tidmann*, describing an episode from the peasants' struggles against feudal lords. In a brief commentary to the song Engels wrote:

"In a country like Germany, where the propertied class includes as much feudal nobility as bourgeoisie, and the proletariat includes as many agricultural labourers as industrial workers, if not more—the zestful old peasant song will be eminently apposite."***

However, the attempts to correct the line of the paper failed to yield results. It continued to court Bismarck's government, and soon Marx and Engels had no choice but to make an official statement against the *Social-Demokrat*. In this statement, written on February 23, 1865, they announced that they could no longer collaborate on the grounds that, despite repeated demands, the edito-

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, Moscow, 1985, p. 33.

** *Ibid.*, p. 32.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 35.

rial board had refused to oppose the Bismarck ministry and the feudal-absolutist party at least as firmly as it opposed the bourgeoisie.

Denouncing the "royal Prussian governmental socialism" of the Lassalleans, Engels more than once voiced his suspicion that the editor of the *Sozial-Demokrat* had simply been bought by Bismarck. And later developments fully confirmed his suspicions.

Engels made a detailed criticism of the Lassalleans in a special pamphlet, *The Prussian Military Question and the German Workers' Party*, which appeared in 1865.

Using the concrete example of the constitutional conflict in Prussia to illustrate his points, Engels explained what should be the attitude of the proletarian party to the warring factions of the propertied classes: to the landlords and their government, on the one hand, and the liberal bourgeoisie, on the other.

In contrast to the Lassalleans, he showed that the proletariat could not in any circumstances support the reactionary Prussian government and the landlords. For purposes of its struggle against the bourgeoisie, reaction flirts at times with the workers, makes concessions here and there—even to the extent of granting universal suffrage, as was the case with Louis Bonaparte. The concessions are made, however, so long as it suits the government to confront the bourgeoisie with a new adversary. But when the working-class movement grows into an independent force, the government seeks to nullify it by persecution.

As to the bourgeoisie, Engels explained, it cannot win political power without at the same time arming the proletariat. To be consistent, the bourgeois opposition should demand universal and di-

rect suffrage, freedom of the press, association, assembly, etc. And the workers' party can utilise this for its own purposes for the struggle against the bourgeoisie.

However, examining the position of the Prussian bourgeoisie in the constitutional conflict, Engels drew the conclusion that, dreading the independent workers' movement, it tended more and more to compromise with the monarchy and was ready to betray its own cause, just as it had done in 1848. The workers should expose the cowardly, inconsistent policy of the bourgeoisie, and if in its cowardice it betrayed itself, then the workers' party should, in spite of it, continue the propaganda for bourgeois democratic demands—freedom of the press, the right to assembly, association, etc.

"We are taking it for granted," Engels pointed out, "that in all these eventualities the workers' party will not play the part of a mere appendage to the bourgeoisie but of an independent party quite distinct from it." The workers' party will explain to the workers their class interest, "and when the next revolutionary storm comes—and these storms now recur as regularly as trade crises and equinoctial storms—it will be ready to act".*

Such were the main thoughts in this pamphlet by Engels, in which he specified the tactics previously outlined in the *Communist Manifesto* to suit the Germany of the 1860s.

Following the rupture with the *Social-Demokrat*, Marx gave up the idea of enlisting the General Association of German Workers in the IWMA. As the latter's corresponding secretary for Germany, he went about organising sections there, which eventually played a conspicuous part in propagating the ideas of the International.

The struggle of Marx and Engels against Lassal-

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 20, p. 78.

leanism greatly facilitated the formation of a workers' organisation in Germany, distinct from the Lassallean.

This was also furthered by the practical experience of the workers' masses themselves, who began to see the fallacies of Lassallean dogma. Experience showed, for instance, that although Bismarck introduced universal suffrage during the elections to the North German Reichstag (1866), the government had no intention whatever of ridding the workers of exploitation by way of producers' associations. The impact of the successful strikes fought by the British, French and Swiss workers, the experience of which was popularised by the International, shattered the Lassallean economic "theories" which rejected trade unions and strike action in favour of the fallacious "iron law of wages". Thus it was that favourable conditions were created for the emergence of a new, socialist party to counteract the Lassallean General Association of German Workers.

The party was organised by August Bebel, a turner, and Wilhelm Liebknecht, friend and associate of Marx and Engels. In 1867, the two of them were elected to the North-German Reichstag. Marx and Engels helped these first ever representatives of the proletariat in parliament to cope with their entirely new and difficult mission. Under the influence of Bebel and Liebknecht, the Union of German Workers' Associations in Saxony broke off relations with the liberal bourgeoisie. In 1868, at its congress in Nuremberg, the Union announced its adherence to the platform of the International. Along with the German sections of the International and a split-away part of the General Association of German Workers, the Union formed the nucleus of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party

set up at the Eisenach Congress in 1869 and known since then as the Eisenach Party.

Engels contributed to the success of the Eisenach Congress with the publication of his first short biography of Karl Marx. He showed that not Lassalle, but Marx and his Communist League had stood at the cradle of the German workers' movement. As for Lassalle, Engels wrote, "he was neither the initial founder of the German workers' movement, nor was he an original thinker. Everything he wrote was derived from elsewhere, not without some misunderstandings either."*

That was how the first socialist proletarian mass organisation came into being within a national framework. Now, Marx and Engels could rely on the experience of the German workers' movement when furthering the formation of proletarian parties in individual countries. It was a big victory for Marxism and an important milestone in the history of the German and international working-class movement.

The workers' movement in Germany until 1875 was the battle-ground on which Lassalleans and Eisenachers came to grips bitterly. The two groups had fundamentally different approaches to the basic question of German political life—the ways and means of securing national unification.

"Given the class relationships then obtaining, it [unification] could have been effected in either of two ways—through a revolution, led by the proletariat, to establish an all-German republic, or through Prussian dynastic wars to strengthen the hegemony of the Prussian landowners in a united Germany," wrote Lenin later. "Lassalle and his followers, in view of the poor chances for the proletarian and democratic way, pursued unstable tactics and adapted themselves to the leadership of the

* Marx, Engels.
Collected Works,
Vol. 21, Moscow,
1985, p. 60.

Junker Bismarck. Their mistake lay in diverting the workers' party on to the Bonapartist-state-socialist path. Bebel and Liebknecht, on the other hand, consistently supported the democratic and proletarian path and struggled against any concessions to Prussianism, Bismarckism or nationalism.**

The Lassalleans, in the spirit of the nationalist attitude of Lassalle and Schweitzer, refused to join the International. The Eisenachers, on the contrary, aligned themselves with the international organisation, with its programme and principles. It should be said, however, that Marx and Engels repeatedly complained to Liebknecht that the Eisenachers were taking too little part in the common work of the International, that they were not active enough in popularising its principles in Germany and were giving it too little financial support.

They had had to correct the Eisenachers on other questions, too. They criticised Liebknecht when his hatred of Prussia prompted him to laud its rival—Austria. The immaturity of the Eisenachers made itself evident in matters of theory: Lassallean influence seeped into their programme (the “free people's state” and producers' associations figured in it). But, Lassalleanism was not as pronounced among the Eisenachers as in the General Association of German Workers.

For all their mistakes and immaturity, they succeeded, thanks to their sound tactics in the main issues facing the German workers at the time, and thanks to the guidance of Marx and Engels, in providing “a sound basis for a genuinely Social-Democratic workers' party. And in those days the essential thing was the *basis* of the party”.**

No small role in the Eisenachers' successful struggle against Lassalleanism was played by the publication in 1867 of the first volume of *Capital*,

* V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, Moscow, 1977, pp. 297-98.

** *Ibid.*, p. 298.

Marx's immortal work, the fruit of long years of tremendous theoretical labours.

The book was finished in exceedingly difficult conditions.

Together with intense theoretical studies, Marx was occupied with the formidably complicated job of leading the International. The concentrated effort and strain sapped his already impaired health; moreover, financial want pressed down on him as heavily as, if not heavier than, before. His connection with the *New-York Daily Tribune* ended in 1862, when the Civil War broke out in the United States. Now, family heirlooms and even clothes often had to be taken to the pawnshop. There were days when Marx was unable to leave the house, unable even to write, because there was no money with which to buy paper.

At one of these difficult moments, turning to his friend for help, Marx wrote: "I assure you that I would rather have had my thumb cut off than write this letter to you. It is truly soul-destroying to be dependent for half one's life. The only thought that sustains me in all this is that the two of us form a partnership together, in which I spend my time on the theoretical and party side of the business."^{*}

Engels's letters to Marx, which usually began by saying that he was sending a few pounds, testify to the touching and considerate care he bestowed on Marx and his family. When Marx's health took a sharp turn for the worse, Engels, filled with alarm, consulted with doctors, and implored him to come to Manchester for a rest, to really take treatment for his illness, which was liable to end fatally.

"Do me and your family the one favour of *getting yourself cured*. What would become of the whole movement if anything were to happen to

^{*} Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 42, p. 172.

you, and the way you are proceeding, that will be the *inevitable* outcome. I really shall not have any peace day or night until I have got you over this business, and every day that passes without my hearing anything from you, I worry and imagine you are worse again.”*

Engels's help to Marx who was working on *Capital*, was not confined to financial support. As a rule, Marx sought his advice on vital theoretical points, set forth his own conclusions in letters, and requested his friend's opinion on different matters. Marx frequently consulted him on practical questions of economics a subject which Engels had at his finger-tips.

Aware of Marx's excessive scientific scrupulousness, which caused endless delay in getting the first volume of *Capital* to the press, Engels, who was anxious to get the first volume to the printers without waiting for the others to be finished, kept urging Marx to make haste.

“I cannot bring myself to send anything off,” Marx rejoined, “until I have the whole thing in front of me. Whatever shortcomings they may have, the advantage of my writings is that they are an artistic whole.”**

At last, on April 2, 1867, Marx informed Engels that he had completed the manuscript of the first volume and that he was about to take it to the printer in Hamburg. Engels reacted to the news with an enthusiastic “hurrah!”

When the proofs began to come in, Marx sent copies to Manchester for his friend's opinion, which he valued more than anything else.

On August 16, 1867, he reported to Engels that he had read the last sheet (the 49th) of *Capital*. The preface, too, had been sent. “So, *this volume is finished*,” wrote Marx, “I owe it to *you* alone that it

* *Ibid.*, pp. 233-34.

** *Ibid.*, p. 173.

was possible! Without your self-sacrifice for me I could not possibly have managed the immense labour demanded by the 3 volumes.... *Salut*, my dear, valued friend.”*

The completion of the first volume was a big event not only in the life of Marx and Engels, it was of great historic importance for the entire working-class movement, for the revolutionary theory of the proletariat.

“As long as there have been capitalists and workers on earth no book has appeared which is of as much importance for the workers as the one before us,”** wrote Engels about *Capital*.

It took Marx twenty-five years of strenuous research before his economic doctrine acquired a finished, classical shape. Its basic features had been set forth in earlier works, such as *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847), *Wage Labour and Capital* (1849), and the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848). Marx’s further economic research resulted in his producing the extensive economic manuscripts of 1857-58 (the first version of *Capital*). In the *Introduction* to these manuscripts, he gave a fuller exposition than anywhere before of his conception of the subject and method of political economy. Central in these manuscripts was the initial exposition of the theory of surplus value, Marx’s second great discovery. The famous preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) brilliantly formulates the essence of historical materialism, which was the guiding thread not only in Marx’s works on history but also in his economic studies.

The result of this herculean labour was his monumental *Capital*. In this immortal work, strict scientific accuracy is combined with revolutionary ardour, and relentless objectivity with profound

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 42, p. 405.

** *Ibid.*, Vol. 20,
p. 231.

partisanship. Employing materialist dialectics, a most powerful instrument, Marx created an economic doctrine which radically changed political economy as a science.

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The Period of the First International and the Paris Commune

2. August 1867

2. August 1867
 2. August 1867
 2. August 1867

Dear friend,

from the London (49.) 2. August
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Moscow 2. August tonight tonight
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 thank you. Dear you, full
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believe 2. August tonight.

2. August 1867 with London 2. August
 thank you, dear friend!
 Dear H. Marx

Marx's letter to Engels on completing the first volume of *Capital*

Only an ideologue of the proletariat, of the class unhampered by the limitations and prejudices of the exploiting classes, could discover the objective laws governing capitalist development, investigate the rise, development and decline of capitalist society, and demonstrate its historically restricted, transient nature.

In his *Capital*, Marx proved that all the defects and vices of capitalism—anarchy of production, crises, unemployment, absolute and relative impoverishment of the proletariat, and ruin of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry—derive from capitalism's basic contradiction between the social nature of production and the private capitalistic form of appropriation.

His great discovery was the theory of surplus value which, in Lenin's words, was the cornerstone of his economic theory. Marx scientifically proved that the source of all unearned income under capitalism (profit, ground rent, etc.) is the unpaid labour of workers, the surplus value, i.e., the difference between the value created by the labour of the worker and the value of his labour power, that is, the value of the means of subsistence needed to maintain the worker and his family. The law of surplus value is the basic economic law of capitalism, expressing the substance of capitalist production. Marx's theory of surplus value laid bare the secret of capitalist exploitation carefully masked by the apologists of capitalism, and disclosed the economic basis of the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

In accordance with the general law of capitalist accumulation discovered by Marx, this antagonism becomes more and more acute with the further development of capitalism. Capitalist society creates not only the material conditions for the socialist re-

volution, it also brings forth the social force destined to carry the proletarian revolution to victory and forever abolish all oppression and exploitation.

Summarising the results of his research, Marx described the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation as follows:

“Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital ... grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this, too, grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.”*

Capital equipped the working class with a scientific understanding of the historical inevitability of the downfall of capitalism and the triumph of the new, communist society. This brilliant work was a landmark in the further development of all components of Marxism — political economy, philosophy and socialism.

With the appearance of *Capital*, Marxism acquired a truly unshakable foundation. Marx's second great discovery (that of surplus value) completed the conversion of socialism from a utopia into a science.

How did bourgeois scholars react to *Capital*?

Since mere vilification and curses were powerless

* Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1986, p. 715.

against Marx's strictly scientific arguments they resolved on a conspiracy of silence, pretending that no such thing as *Capital* had ever been written.

Engels, determined to break through that wall of silence, did not confine himself to reviewing *Capital* for the few workers' newspapers and newspapers sympathetic to the workers' movement then in existence. He struck upon the original idea of sending, through fictitious people, a series of critical reviews to a number of bourgeois papers. On September 11, 1867, we find him writing to Marx: "Do you think I should attack the thing from the bourgeois point of view, to get things under way?" To which Marx replied: "Your plan to attack the book from the bourgeois point of view is the best tactic."*

With a view to effecting his "military ruse", Engels invoked the help of a few close friends, whom he supplied with model reviews which they, after making a few changes, could then send to the newspapers. The main idea behind this was to force the opposition to speak about the book, to get bourgeois economists to express their views on it.

The ruse worked—reviews appeared in a number of bourgeois papers. In the guise of criticism, Engels displayed remarkable skill in presenting Marx's views in a way that the reader was left with the impression that it was Marx who was right, and not his "critic". In reality, Engels's sharply turned reviews were directed against the vulgar economists, whom he goaded to writing about *Capital*, and also against Lassallean theory.

Engels regarded the completion of the first volume of *Capital* as the beginning of a new life not only for Marx but also for himself. There were now grounds for believing that Marx's income from writing would increase and that he himself could

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 426-27.

finish with his commercial pursuits once and for all.

In a letter to Marx he wrote: "There is nothing I long for so much as for release from this vile commerce, which is completely demoralising me with all the time it is wasting."*

It took another couple of years, however, before Engels could get enough of a compensation from his partner on retiring from the firm to support not only himself but also the Marx family.

At last, on July 1, 1869, he wrote to Marx: "Hurrah! Today *doux commerce* is at an end, and I am a free man."** Marx replied at once, congratulating him warmly. It was only on this happy day that his friends, who never once heard him complain about his fate, realised what the long years of office life had been to him. Marx's daughter, Eleanor (Tussy), who was on a visit to Engels at the time, has described this memorable day in her memoirs:

"I shall never forget the triumph with which he exclaimed: 'For the last time!' as he put on his boots in the morning to go to the office for the last time.

"A few hours later we were standing at the gate waiting for him. We saw him coming over the little field opposite the house where he lived. He was swinging his cane in the air and singing, his face beaming. Then we set the table for a celebration and drank champagne and were happy. I was then too young to understand all that and when I think of it now the tears come to my eyes."***

This joy of a man who had at long last rid himself of a heavy load that had burdened him for years was expressed also in the letters to his relatives and friends. "Today is the first day of my freedom..." he wrote to his mother. "My new freedom

* *Ibid.*, p. 363.

** *Ibid.*, Vol. 43,

p. 299.

*** *Reminiscences of
Marx and Engels*,
pp. 185-86.

is just the thing for me. Since yesterday I have been quite a new man, and ten years younger".*

Engels's joy was heightened by the fact that he had won freedom for scientific and political work at a time when the approach of major political events was felt in Europe. "I don't need to tell you," he wrote to Ludwig Kugelmann on July 10, 1869, "how happy I am to be rid of that damned commerce, and to be able to work for myself again. Particularly, too, since this was possible just now, when events in Europe are taking an increasingly critical turn and when, one fine day, the thunder may clap quite unexpectedly".**

Though Engels was compelled to stay in Manchester for still some time to wind up his affairs, he was now able to help Marx in guiding the newly founded proletarian party in Germany. The immaturity of the Eisenach leaders resulted, among other things, in their underestimating the resolution of the Basle Congress of the International (1869) on the necessity for establishing collective ownership of land. This resolution reaffirmed the decision of the Brussels Congress (1868) on socialising arable land, forests, mines and quarries, railways and roads, canals, the post and telegraph. The International's adoption of the socialist platform was a major ideological triumph for Marxism. When putting out a new edition of his *Peasant War in Germany* in 1870, Engels explained in a preface to it the tremendous importance of the Basle Congress resolution on this score precisely for Germany. Elaborating on Marx's and his own agrarian views, he had here for the first time substantiated the need for differentiated approach to various strata of the peasantry. He argued that aside from the small peasants, farm labourers were the most numerous and natural ally of the proletariat.

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 43, pp. 300, 302.

** *Ibid.*, p. 313.

and stressed the immense importance for the proletarian party to have ties with the countryside.

Now Engels could also devote more time to his scientific endeavours. He began a serious study of Irish history. Together with his wife, Lizzie Burns (sister of the dead Mary), and Eleanor Marx, he set out on a tour of Ireland to get first-hand knowledge of that oppressed land.

There was nothing accidental about Engels's interest in Ireland. In those days the Irish question played a big role in the International. Marx and Engels saw in the national animosity between English and Irish workers, which was artificially inflamed by the ruling classes, the secret of the weakness of the English working class. They held that the International should awaken the English proletariat to a knowledge of the fact that "*the national emancipation of Ireland is not a question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment, but the first condition of their own social emancipation.*"**

They summoned the English proletariat to active struggle for Irish independence: the separation of Ireland and an agrarian revolution there would be a powerful blow against the English ruling classes (bourgeoisie and landlords) and would give an impulse to the revolution in England. And an English revolution would in its turn exert a powerful influence on the revolutionary movement in the countries of the Continent.

"The policy of Marx and Engels on the Irish question," wrote Lenin, "serves as a splendid example of the attitude the proletariat of the oppressor nations should adopt towards national movements, an example which has lost none of its immense *practical* importance."***

Engels began his study of Ireland precisely at the time when the agrarian movement and the bloody

* *Ibid.*, p. 475.

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 442.

reprisals taken by the British government against the Fenians brought the Irish question to the forefront. His wife, Lizzie Burns, an Irishwoman with revolutionary convictions, as Engels described her, ardently sympathised with the fight of her people for national independence and helped the Irish revolutionaries who found refuge, shelter from persecution, and other help in Engels's house. When Marx's daughter Jenny wrote in defence of the Fenians in the French newspaper, the *Marseillaise*, Engels congratulated her on her well-earned success, and wrote: "You should have seen how the whole thing pleased my wife. She is endlessly grateful to you for exposing all this filth."* While supporting the Fenians, he did not hesitate to criticise them for their conspiratorial tactics and their lack of contact with the broad mass of the freedom-loving Irish people.

Attaching tremendous theoretical and political importance to the Irish question, Engels intended writing a capital history of the country, designed to show the process of its transformation into England's first colony, into "the bulwark of English landlordism". After starting work on the book, he wrote to Marx on October 24, 1869: "Irish history shows what a misfortune it is for one nation to subjugate another."**

Of the planned four chapters he wrote only the first—"Natural Conditions"—and part of the second—"Old Ireland."***

As he had foreseen, Europe was shortly to be caught up in the vortex of big events which, for a long time, broke off his Irish studies. Soon the world was to hear of the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune.

* *The Correspondence of Marx, Engels, and Members of His Family, 1835-1871* (Russ. ed.), Moscow, 1983, p. 456.

** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 43, p. 363.

*** *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, pp. 145-85.

War broke out between France and Prussia on July 19, 1870. Four days later, on July 23, the General Council of the International issued an Address, written by Marx, to the workers of all countries.

In this Address, Marx characterised the Franco-Prussian War as a dynastic war where France was concerned, conceived in the interests of Bonaparte, and a defensive war for Germany, since it was waged against Bonapartist France which wanted Germany to remain fragmentised and which hindered her national unification. However, Marx did not fail to underline the sharp difference between Germany's real interests in the war and the predatory aims pursued by the Prussian reactionaries.

Marx urged the workers to make sure that Prussia's striving for conquest did not turn the defensive war into a predatory war for loot. Pointing to a series of appeals and resolutions adopted by French and German workers, he noted with satisfaction that the more advanced among them had taken a correct internationalist stand.

"This great fact, unparalleled in the history of the past, opens the vista of a brighter future. It proves that in contrast to the old society, with its economical miseries and its political delirium, a new society is springing up, whose International rule will be *Peace*, because its national ruler will be everywhere the same—*Labour!* The Pioneer of that new society is the International Working Men's Association."^{*}

Engels attached very great importance to the fact that the advanced workers represented by the General Council of the IWMA had thus defined their attitude towards the Franco-Prussian War. "The Address," he wrote to Marx, "will teach the *populus* of all classes that nowadays the workers

^{*} *Ibid.*, Vol. 22,
Moscow, 1986, p. 7.

are the only ones to have a *real* foreign policy.”*

In a letter to Marx dated August 15, 1870, Engels suggested the tactics that should be employed by the German workers and their party in the complicated conditions of the Franco-Prussian War. These should, he wrote, make a clear distinction between Germany's national interests and Prussia's dynastic interests, oppose annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, call for honourable peace the moment a republican, non-chauvinist government is formed in Paris, and continually seek unity of the German and French workers who did not want the war and who were not fighting each other. Marx and Engels recommended this tactics to the German Socialist Workers' Party.

Whereas, during the first vote on war credits in July 1870, Bebel and Liebknecht abstained, stressing no confidence in the Prussian government, the Lassalleans, in the spirit of their nationalist policy, unconditionally supported Bismarck by voting for the credits.

Very soon two events—Bismarck's declaration that he intended to annex Alsace-Lorraine and the fall of Louis Bonaparte, as Marx had predicted in the First Address, followed by the proclamation of the French Republic on September 4, 1870—impelled the General Council to issue another Address. In it Marx pointed out that on Germany's side the war had now become a war of conquest and urged the workers to protest against the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, to campaign for an honourable peace for France and recognition of the French Republic. He called upon the French workers to perform their duty as citizens, to resist the wave of nationalism, to have no confidence in the new government, which consisted of men of the propertied classes, and to make use of

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, S. 15.

republican liberties to improve their own class organisation. With brilliant foresight, Marx predicted that the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine would throw France into the embrace of Tsarist Russia. The section of the Address which pointed out that the annexation, even from the standpoint of military strategy, was not in Germany's interest, was written by Engels.

The changed character of the war necessitated new tactics on the part of the German workers. By voting against war credits in the Reichstag, Bebel and Liebknecht had condemned the predatory war against the people of France.

Shortly afterwards Bebel and Liebknecht and a number of other Social-Democrats were arrested and thrown into jail. Engels hastened to come to the moral and material aid of the victims and their families. "The German workers," he wrote in a letter to Liebknecht's wife, "have displayed an understanding and energy during the war which puts them at the head of the European workers' movement at a stroke, and you will appreciate the sense of pride with which we witness it."*

The International, led by Marx, came through the trials of the war with flying colours; it gave a magnificent display of proletarian internationalism in the complicated conditions of the Franco-Prussian War.

From the outset of the war, Engels regularly contributed reviews of the military developments to *The Pall Mall Gazette*. His reviews, "Notes on the War", produced a real sensation, because the predictions they contained of the further course of the fighting inevitably came true. Eight days before the battle at Sedan, he predicted the French disaster. Since the articles were published unsigned, they were ascribed to the pen of some distinguished mil-

* *Ibid.*, Bd. 33, S. 167.

itary expert. Among his friends, who knew that he was their author, they evoked a storm of applause. It was at this time that Marx's daughter, Jenny, conferred the title of General on him. The title stuck, for his intimate circle of friends he was General ever since.

On September 20, 1870, Frederick Engels left Manchester for London and took up residence in a house not more than ten minutes' walk away from Marx. The friends could now meet and discuss all the topics previously dealt with chiefly by correspondence.

Engels came to see Marx every day, and they either went for walks or spent the time indoors in Marx's study. Eleanor Marx has described how they walked up and down the room, each following his own diagonal, from corner to corner, talking for hours on all kinds of subjects. Sometimes the discussion of a particular topic took up a number of these visits.

Paul Lafargue, who married Marx's daughter Laura, has left his impression of these talks. "I remember," he wrote in his reminiscences, "a discussion on the Albigenses that lasted for several days. In the intervals between their meetings they studied the disputed question in order to form a common opinion. No other criticism of their thoughts and work was as valuable for them as their mutual criticism. They had the highest opinion of each other."*

Upon taking up residence in London, Engels, on Marx's suggestion, was co-opted to the General Council of the International. With the greatest joy, he threw himself into political and organising work. Together with Marx, he directed the campaign for recognition of the French Republic, and trenchantly criticised the English trade union lead-

* *Reminiscences of
Marx and Engels*,
p. 90.

ers—members of the International—for their half-hearted participation in the campaign, and generally for taking no vigorous action against Britain's foreign policy. At a General Council meeting, held at the end of January 1871, his resolution denouncing the foreign policy of the British government gave rise to a long and heated debate.

His "Notes on the War" series scathingly criticised the predatory policy of the Bismarck government and the barbarous "Prussian" conduct of the war. He lauded the French guerilla fighters who had taken to arms in order to repel the invader.

While calling for recognition of the French Republic, Marx and Engels at the same time denounced its government and its generals as men who, fearing the workers, were ready to commit treason and who, in order to free their hands for the struggle against their own people, wanted peace at any price with the Prussians. As Marx expressed it, this was a government not of "national defence" as it styled itself, but of "national defection".

The French working class soon became convinced of this, seeing the government's defeatist policy and its attempts, by means of hunger and military defeats, to break the will of the armed workers defending the besieged Paris. In the small hours of March 18, 1871, the Thiers government prepared a decisive assault against the Paris proletariat—it conspired to seize the National Guard artillery on the Montmartre Heights. The people retaliated by taking to arms. The government, frightened out of its wits, fled to Versailles. For the first time in history, power had passed into the hands of the workers.

After the coup of September 4, 1870, Marx and Engels warned the French workers against any untimely rising, especially since the Prussian troops

were at the gates of the city. They counselled them to make full use of all the legal opportunities afforded by the Republic and, as a vital condition for victory, to strengthen their own organisation.

However, the moment the course of events and the logic of the ongoing class struggle led to the revolution of March 18, Marx and Engels, with all the fervour and passion of true proletarian leaders, rushed to the aid of the Paris workers who, as Marx put it, were "storming the heavens",* and came out in support of the struggle of the valiant workers of Paris. Engels participated wholeheartedly in the General Council's drive for aid to revolutionary Paris by proletarian organisations all over the world.

On March 21, Engels submitted a detailed report of the events in the French capital to a meeting of the General Council. Citing letters received from Paris, he reported that power was in the hands of the people and that the men who belonged to the Central Committee of the National Guard were well known among the working class. On Marx's suggestion the meeting adopted a resolution which urged the English workers to express sympathy with Paris insurgents.

Reporting on the course of struggle in Paris at the meeting of the General Council on April 11, Engels drew attention to the cardinal error committed by the Commune: "... After the election there had been talk and no action. The time for action against Versailles had been when it was weak, but that opportunity had been lost and now it seemed that Versailles was getting the upper hand and driving the Parisians back." But, he went on, the workers were "far better organised than at any former insurrection".**

Marx and Engels helped the Communards with

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, S. 206.

** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 588.

advice, criticised their mistakes, supplied them with confidential material about the state of the Prussian army, etc.

But the counsel which Marx and Engels managed with the greatest difficulty to get through to besieged Paris could not compensate for the fatal shortcoming of the French working-class movement—the absence of an advanced proletarian party. Neither the followers of Blanqui nor of Proudhon were able to provide the Commune with the requisite leadership, to work out a proletarian strategy and tactics, and have them carried into effect.

Criticising the mistakes of the Commune, Marx and Engels commended the heroism and creative initiative of the Paris workers. Referring to their struggle, they formulated a number of exceedingly valuable conclusions for revolutionary theory. In the well-known letter to Ludwig Kugelmann, dated April 12, 1871, Marx wrote: "If you look at the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I say that the next attempt of the French revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *break* it, and that is essential for every real people's revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting. What resilience, what historical initiative, what a capacity for sacrifice in these Parisians!... History has no like example of a like greatness." *

In this letter, Marx confined his conclusion to the necessity of smashing the old state machine on the Continent, thus making an exception in the case of England. Because in England the working class constituted the bulk of the population, and the militarists and bureaucracy did not as yet play

* Marx, Engels,
Werke, Bd. 33, S. 205.

any significant role, Marx believed that, with conditions being what they were, the English proletariat could win political power in a peaceful way. But, as Engels wrote, Marx never forgot to add that "he hardly expected the English ruling classes to submit, without a 'pro-slavery rebellion', to this peaceful and legal revolution".*

Although the two friends foresaw the possible defeat of the Paris Commune, they stressed its great historical role— the beginning of a new era in world history. Thus we find Marx expressing himself in the following terms in a letter to Kugelmann on April 17, 1871: "The struggle of the working class against the capitalist class and its state has entered upon a new phase with the struggle in Paris. Whatever the immediate results may be, a new point of departure of world-historic importance has been gained."**

While the fighting on the barricades in Paris was still continuing, Marx wrote the Address of the General Council of the International, *The Civil War in France*, which he read at a meeting of the Council on May 30. With his amazing capacity for grasping the essence of events, he pointed to the historical significance of the Paris Commune.

He summarised the historical experience of the masses and made a conclusion of exceptional importance for his theory of the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Subjecting the activity of the Commune to minute analysis, Marx reaffirmed his earlier thesis that the proletariat, upon coming to power, should demolish the old state apparatus. The Commune had shown that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes".*** Both he and Engels attached so much importance to this conclu-

* Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 17.

** Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, S. 209.

*** Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 328.

sion on the tasks of the proletariat in relation to the old, bourgeois state that in an 1872 preface to the *Communist Manifesto*, they described it as a further development of the first programme document of Marxism.

The experience of the Commune also enabled Marx to draw the contours of the new type of state needed by the proletariat. He decided that the Commune was the "political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of Labour".*

He showed that the Commune was the genuinely national government of France, the defender of the interests of the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, and representative of all the sound elements in French society. He lauded the exploit of the Communards, and denounced their butchers.

The Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune brought to an end a long phase in the history of the working-class movement. Whereas at the beginning of this phase the doctrine of Marx and Engels was but one of the many trends of socialism, the 1848 revolution and then the Paris Commune struck devastating blows at all the varieties of the pre-Marxian petty-bourgeois socialism. The bitterly contested revolutionary battles strikingly revealed the groundlessness of the diverse sects and schools of socialism which had been contending against Marxism. "Towards the end of the first period (1848-71)," wrote Lenin, "a period of storms and revolutions, pre-Marxian socialism was dead." **

The resolutions on collective property of the Brussels and Basle congresses had already rung in the victory of the principles of scientific communism over petty-bourgeois reformism. Yet Marxism's ideological victory within the International was

* *Ibid.*, p. 334.

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, Moscow, 1977, p. 583.

still more strikingly marked with Marx's *The Civil War in France*. If we compare this Address signed by members of the General Council of the IWA with the General Council's *Inaugural Address*, we will see what a long distance the International had traversed in working out its theoretical programme.

Reformism, anarchism, and the various petty-bourgeois trends in the workers' movement, however, were reluctant to leave the field. It was, indeed, precisely after the Commune, which advanced to the forefront vital questions of the proletarian revolution, that internal struggle grew more acute in the International. The Bakuninists, the opportunist English trade union leaders, and other elements hostile to Marxism launched all-out attacks on Marx and Engels, and their supporters.

This struggle was accompanied by ruthless government persecution of the International in all countries. Military and civil courts, uniformed and secret police and the press of the ruling classes now competed in hounding the International Working Men's Association. This, of course, did not fail to influence the opportunist elements in its ranks.

Immediately after the publication of *The Civil War in France*, in which the International sided publicly with the Commune, sharp differences made themselves felt in the General Council of the International. The English trade union leaders Odger and Lucraft protested against this document, which openly raised the banner of proletarian dictatorship. They had been influenced by the howl raised in the capitalist press over *The Civil War in France*. Slinging mud at the Communards, the papers claimed that the Paris events had been the result of a "plot" organised by the International and threatened Marx, its "dictator", with le-

gal proceedings. Having no desire to align themselves with the Paris Commune, Odger and Lucreft betrayed the International at a most critical moment. And the General Council unanimously expelled these traitors from its midst.

Meanwhile, the Bakuninists renewed the attacks which they had first launched against the General Council before the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune.

Bakunin, who had joined the International Working Men's Association in 1869, instead of dissolving his International Alliance of Socialist Democracy, secretly extended it, forming his own anarchist organisation inside the International. In doing so, he aimed at seizing leadership of the IWA. Bakunin's anarchist views found a measure of support in a number of countries with a fairly numerous petty-bourgeois population, for example, in Spain, Italy, the Romance part of Switzerland, and in Belgium. Alarmed by the growth of capitalism, the petty bourgeoisie, as well as the lumpenproletariat, were fertile soil for the Bakunin propaganda calling for insurrection. The Bakuninists sought to attract all the elements in the International who, though not sharing anarchist views, disagreed with Marx on some fundamental issues of the working-class movement.


The attitude to the Commune, to the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the proletarian party – this was now the key criterion of the different trends in the International. Anarchism was the chief obstacle to assimilating the valuable experience of the Paris Commune.

When Engels moved to London, he lost no time to pitch in and help Marx enormously in running the International.

His extensive knowledge, political experience







and immense energy soon won him prestige among the members of the International. Engels became corresponding secretary for Belgium, and a little later also corresponding secretary for Spain. In August 1871, he was elected corresponding secretary for Italy as well. Later, he also fulfilled secretarial duties for Portugal and Denmark. As member of the General Council, Engels strove to unite the revolutionary elements of the British working-class movement. He tried to make the British Federal Council formed in October 1871 a beachhead for the founding of an independent English working-class party. He had close ties with sections of the International in Manchester and their leaders, Edward Jones and Eugène Dupont, and also with the Irish sections, which he considered the nucleus of a future Irish workers' party. Now his language studies stood him in good stead. "His knowledge of European languages and even dialects," wrote Lafargue, "was unbelievable. When, after the fall of the Commune, I met the members of the National Council of the International in Spain, they told me that somebody called 'Angel' was replacing me as secretary of the General Council for Spain and that he wrote perfect Castillian. 'Angel' was Engels with his name pronounced in the Spanish way. When I went to Lisbon, França, secretary of the National Council for Portugal, told me he had got letters from Engels in impeccable Portuguese.... Engels made it a point of vanity to write to his correspondents in their mother tongue: he wrote to Lavrov in Russian, to Frenchmen in French, to Poles in Polish, and so on." *

After the fall of the Paris Commune, when a mass of emigrants streamed from Paris to London, Engels was in the thick of the General Council's efforts to help the Communards.



As corresponding secretary for a number of countries, he eagerly helped the detachments of the proletariat that came to grips with their oppressors. He organised help for the cigar workers on strike in Antwerp and for strikers in Brussels; he called on the London workers to help the textile workers on strike in Barcelona, etc. After every such strike new contingents of the proletariat joined the International Working Men's Association.

Engels functioned as General Council secretary for those sections of the International which, from the standpoint of leadership, offered the greatest difficulties. The Bakuninists had secret networks in Spain and Italy, and it often happened that the men who represented sections of the International there were under Bakunin's influence.

In the letters which Engels sent to the leaders of national sections on behalf of the General Council, he widely propagated the lessons of the Commune, explaining the scientific principles of the strategy and tactics of the working class, tactfully correcting the Bakuninist aberrations of the section leaders, and combating Bakunin's anarchist views.

Engels showed how wrong and harmful was the Bakunin policy of abstaining from politics. He made it clear that the best way to rid the proletariat of the influence of the old parties upholding the interests of the propertied classes was to form a proletarian party in each country with an independent policy of its own, aimed at emancipating the workers.

When formulating a party's political programme, Engels pointed out, it was necessary to proceed from the general laws, while taking into account the specific features of the country con-

* *Reminiscences of
Marx and Engels*,
p. 92.

cerned. "The details of this political programme might vary according to the special circumstances in each country; but the fundamental relations between labour and capital being everywhere the same, and the fact of political domination by the propertied classes over the exploited classes existing everywhere, the principles and the goal of the proletarian political programme will be identical, at least in all the western countries." *

Engels occupied himself, too, with preparations for the London Conference of the International due in September 1871. Its principal purpose was to sum up the experience and lessons of the Paris Commune. At the Conference, Engels joined Marx in a sharp and pertinent attack on the views of the Bakuninists. In his speech on workers' political action, he demonstrated the absurdity of abstaining from politics, especially after the Paris Commune which had put the question of political action by the proletariat on the order of the day. "We seek the abolition of Classes. What is the means of achieving it? The political domination of the proletariat. And when everyone is agreed on that, we are asked not to get involved in politics!" ** The resolution adopted by the conference emphasised that against the collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party; the constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the social Revolution and its ultimate end — the abolition of classes." *** The London Conference condemned all kinds of sectarian organisations and extended the powers of the General Council.

The decisions of the London Conference, which marked another victory for Marxism, met with

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 22, p. 278.

** *Ibid.*, p. 417.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 427.

fierce opposition on the part of the Bakuninists. Seeking to turn the International into an association of completely independent and "autonomous" groups, into a hodge-podge of diverse factions, and the General Council into something in the nature of a "letter box", an information bureau, the Bakuninists charged the Council with having "usurped power". They screamed about "dictatorship by Germans" and by Marx in particular. In his letters and articles, Engels called for iron proletarian discipline against the Bakuninist attempts to discredit the Conference and wreck the International from within.

He vigorously combated the Bakuninist broadsides against "power", "authority", centralisation and discipline. "It was the lack of centralisation and authority," he wrote, "that cost the Paris Commune its life.... And when I am told that authority and centralisation are two things that should be condemned under all possible circumstances it seems to me that those who say so either do not know what a revolution is or are revolutionaries in name only." *

In a series of letters and articles, published in the newspapers of the Italian, Spanish and other federations, Engels criticised Bakuninist theory and in the first instance his views on the state. The greatest evil that should be eliminated, according to Bakunin, was not capital and, by implication, not the class antagonism between capitalist and worker, but the State, which should be destroyed and replaced in future society by the International. Criticising this anarchist concept of the future society, Engels wrote to Theodor Cuno, organiser of the Milan section of the International: "In this society there will above all be no *authority*, for authority=state=absolute evil. (How these people

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, S. 374-75.

propose to run a factory, operate a railway or steer a ship without a will that decides in the last resort, without a central administration, they of course do not tell us.) The authority of the majority over the minority also ceases. Every individual and every community is autonomous; but as to how a society of even only two people is possible unless each gives up some of his autonomy, Bakunin again maintains silence.” *

Bakuninism soon became the rallying point for all anti-Marxist elements in the working-class movement. The Liberal leaders of the English trade unions and the “royal Prussian socialists” in the Lassallean General Association of German Workers, all, notwithstanding their differences, joined forces with the Bakuninists against Marxism. In effect, the Bakuninists allied themselves with European reaction, which proclaimed a crusade against the International. Some had direct ties with the police.

For the purpose of exposing Bakunin’s conspiracy, the General Council issued a confidential circular to its sections, headed *Fictitious Splits in the International*. The circular, which had been drawn up by Marx and Engels, set forth the history of the struggle conducted by the Bakunist sect in the International and trenchantly criticised their “autonomy” slogan, the purpose of which was to disorganise the International and destroy its discipline; their treacherous “anarchy” slogan was described as a means of disarming the proletariat in the face of a well-armed bourgeoisie. Marx and Engels showed that Bakuninism was a variety of sectarianism. Sectarianism, they pointed out, derives from the infancy of the proletarian movement. As this movement developed, sectarianism became ever more reactionary. Marx and Engels demon-

* Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence,
p. 258.

strated its social roots — the influence of the petty-bourgeois environment on the working class.

In their struggle against Bakuninism, the most dangerous enemy in the International, Marx and Engels had the firm support of the Russian section of the International. Its organisers — political refugees who had imbibed the ideas of the famous revolutionary democrats Nikolai Chernyshevsky and Nikolai Dobrolyubov — requested Marx to act as their spokesman on the General Council. Replying on March 24, 1870, Marx informed the Russians that their section had been admitted to the International and that he would act for them on the Council. The section greatly helped Marx and Engels, placing at their disposal documentary proof of the disruptive and subversive activity carried on by Bakunin and his followers, particularly in Russia.

In April 1872, Engels received word from Lafargue that a secret Bakunist organisation called the Alliance was active in the IWA in Spain. It was essential to collect documentary evidence on this score. And Engels took the job upon himself.

Engels was also occupied preparing for the IWA Congress that was to gather in The Hague in the autumn of 1872. He took charge of the discussion of the drafts of the General Rules and the Administrative Regulations which were to be adopted by the coming congress. At a meeting of the General Council in July, he suggested that it should be given wider powers, that it be vested with the right to expel separate sections and federal councils in the period between congresses. In his prolific correspondence with a number of sections, he exposed the Bakunin agents — open and secret — with a view to identifying and rallying the best elements around the General Council; he organised them scrupulously, and counted every vote and every

mandate in order that Marx's supporters should have a dependable majority at the Congress.

Despite the disruptive work of the Bakuninists, despite all their intrigues and machinations, the majority did indeed side with Marx and Engels.

The Congress was highlighted by a sharp clash with the Bakuninists.

In spite of the Bakuninists, the Congress recognised the necessity for political struggle and for forming a proletarian party as the main condition for successful socialist revolution. The resolution of the London Conference which contained this important Marxist thesis was incorporated in the Rules of the International and became a law for all its members. Contrary to the wishes of the Bakuninists to greatly reduce the functions of the General Council, the Congress enlarged its powers to act against all disruptive elements and adventurers.

A special commission, under the chairmanship of Theodor Cuno, was set up to investigate the Bakuninists' splitting activities. The General Council's report submitted to the Hague Congress, on the Alliance of Socialist Democracy (it was drawn up by Engels), contained much factual material testifying to the Bakuninists' specious, double-dealing and disruptive activity in the sections of the International. "For the first time in the history of the working-class struggle," said the report, "we stumble upon a secret conspiracy plotted in the midst of the working class, and intended to undermine, not the existing exploiting regime, but the very Association in which that regime finds its fiercest opponent." *

After the commission had submitted its report, the Congress expelled the most prominent leaders of the Alliance — Bakunin and Guillaume. As subsequently related by Engels, members of the Paris

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, Moscow, 1987, p. 233.

Commune who were present at this decisive session of the Congress, declared that none of the meetings of the Commune had moved them so much as this trial of the traitors to the European proletariat.

The resolutions of the Hague Congress were of the utmost importance for the history of the International. They showed that the Marxist programme and organisational principles had taken the upper hand over anarchism and reformism.

In The Hague, speaking on his own behalf and that of Marx and a number of other delegates, Engels substantiated the proposal for transferring the seat of the General Council to New York. One of the reasons he cited was that the persecution of the International was being intensified in all European countries, and that anarchist wreckers and certain other petty-bourgeois elements had burrowed their way into some of its sections.

At first, the majority had insisted that the IWA leadership remain the same as before. But both Marx and Engels firmly refused a new term in office on the grounds that they needed more free time for their scientific pursuits. At long last, it was decided to transfer the General Council to New York.

Theodor Cuno, who took part in the Congress, produced this sketch of Engels at that time: "He is a tall, bony man with sharp-cut features, long, sandy whiskers, ruddy complexion and little blue eyes. His manner of moving and speaking is quick, determined, and convinces the observer that the man knows exactly what he wants and what will be the consequences of his words and actions. In conversation with him one learns something new with every sentence he utters. His brain contains a mighty treasury of scientific knowledge; Engels speaks more than a dozen languages." *

* *Reminiscences of
Marx and Engels*,
p. 209.

After the Hague Congress, Engels was busy sending instructions to the General Council located in New York. He supplied its secretary-general, Friedrich Adolf Sorge, with regular and detailed information about the state of affairs in the IWA sections in various European countries and at the same time continued the struggle against the adversaries of Marxism. In conformity with the Congress decision to publish the documents on the Alliance, he and Marx, aided by Lafargue, issued in 1873 the pamphlet, *The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men's Association*.^{*} The pamphlet which, as it were, summed the results of the struggle against anarchism, reproduced the report on the history of the Alliance and its disruptive activity in different countries. The documents issued by the Alliance were given in an annex to the report. In addition to the material of the investigating commission, the pamphlet included new documents, in particular about the activity of the Alliance in Russia and the undisguised splitting activity which it was carrying on after the Hague Congress.

Engels produced a series of articles containing a withering criticism of anarchism, including the articles "On Authority" and "The Bakuninists at Work". In the latter article, he analysed the role of the Bakuninists in the Spanish uprising in 1873 and concluded by saying that in Spain they "have given us an unparalleled example of how a revolution should *not* be made".^{**}

The anarchist "theories", which were ideologically defeated in the International, also demonstrated that they were worthless in practice, too.

^{*} Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 454-580.

^{**} *Ibid.*, p. 598.

Marxism's ideological victory in the International coincided with radical changes in the world situation, which could not but affect its functions.

"The worker of England corrupted by imperialist profits, the Commune defeated in Paris, the recent (1871) triumph of the bourgeois national movement in Germany, the age-long sleep of semi-feudal Russia"—such was Lenin's description of the situation that shaped after the defeat of the Paris Commune. "Marx and Engels gauged the times accurately; they understood the international situation; they understood that the approach to the beginning of the social revolution must be *slow*." *

What was needed now was painstaking preparatory work, gathering and organising forces, and founding proletarian parties in different countries.

In its old form, the International no longer met the new demands history had set the working class. By 1874 the International Working Men's Association had, in effect, ceased to exist, and was officially dissolved in 1876.

In an appreciation of the significance of the First International in history, Engels wrote: "The International dominated one side of European history—the side on which the future lies—for ten years, and can look back upon its work with pride." **

The growth of the workers' movement, the spread of Marxism and the training of class-conscious workers' leaders capable of becoming the core of future workers' parties, paved the way for the founding of mass socialist parties in various countries. "The First International," wrote Lenin, "had played its historical part, and now made way for a period of a far greater development of the labour movement in all countries in the world, a period in which the movement grew in *scope*, and

* V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, Moscow, 1980, p. 86.

** Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 270-71.

*mass socialist working-class parties in individual national states were formed.” **

The international solidarity of the proletariat, embodied in the International Working Men’s Association, continued to grow and gain strength, the only difference being its new forms which corresponded to the new and higher level of the workers’ movement.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 49.

IX. The Last Few Years with Marx

The new period which set in after the defeat of the Paris Commune was “peaceful” and distinguished by the absence of revolutions. “The West had finished with bourgeois revolutions,” wrote Lenin. “The East had not yet risen to them. The West entered a phase of ‘peaceful’ preparations for the changes to come.” *

Marx and Engels now devoted themselves to helping to establish proletarian parties, and preparing them for future revolutionary battles. They trained leaders for the parties, and helped them with advice in drawing up programmes and in working out strategy and tactics. The two friends carefully took into account the peculiarities of each country, its economy, the balance of class forces, the experience of its working class, the theoretical level of the movement, and the obstacles to fusing it with socialism, to founding a mass proletarian party in the country concerned.

In so doing, they applied the dialectical method, the necessity for which in approaching the working-class movement in different countries was also repeatedly pointed out by Lenin: “To seek out, investigate, predict, and grasp that which is nationally specific and nationally distinctive, in the *concrete manner* in which each country should tackle a *single* international task....” **

When helping to found socialist parties in different countries, they devoted their main attention to the struggle for the purity of the revolutionary

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, Moscow, 1973, p. 583.

** *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, Moscow, 1982, p. 92.

theory of the proletariat, for the monolithic unity of the party, and for the unity of theory and practice.

Engels attached tremendous importance to revolutionary theory. In the Supplement to the Preface of 1870 for the third edition of *The Peasant War in Germany*, which came out in 1875, he wrote of the close and organic connection between the three forms of the proletarian struggle – the theoretical, political, and economic. He saw the unity of these three forms as the guarantee of success and of the invincibility of the working-class movement.

After the Hague, in effect the last, Congress of the International, the role of Marx and Engels as leaders of the international working-class movement only increased. In fact, it became still more complicated. The main burden of the daily practical guidance of the socialist movement in the struggle against open and concealed adversaries of Marxism now fell to Engels. "As a consequence of the division of labour that existed between Marx and myself," wrote Engels, "it fell to me to present our opinions in the periodical press, and, therefore, particularly in the fight against opposing views, in order that Marx should have time for the elaboration of his great basic work." * What Engels says here about articles in the periodical press applies also to correspondence with socialists in various countries. Most of the correspondence was now conducted by him.

Marx and Engels devoted special attention to the working-class movement in Germany. Indeed, after the Franco-Prussian War and the defeat of the Paris Commune, the centre of gravity of the workers' movement had shifted for a time to Germany.

In letters and articles, Engels analysed the rea-

* K. Marx and
F. Engels, *Selected
Works*, Vol. 2, p. 297.

sons why the German workers found themselves at the head of the international proletariat. He saw one of the main reasons for this in Germany's late and more rapid industrial development compared with Britain and France.

Aside from the deep-going industrial revolution and the resulting acute class struggle, Engels traced the vanguard role of the German workers' movement also to the fact that it had Marxism at its disposal as a programme which its English and French predecessors did not have.

But these favourable conditions notwithstanding, building a workers' party in Germany was far from simple. The independent workers' party was established in struggle against the bourgeoisie and the Junkers, against their attempts to dominate the workers' movement, and also in ceaseless struggle against petty-bourgeois influences which led to Right and "Left" opportunism.

In his letters and in a series of articles in the working-class press, Engels continued to combat Lassalleism, and, at the same time, helped the Eisenachers to correct their line and criticised their immature theoretical views and political errors.

The theoretical immaturity of the Eisenachers led them, for example, to publish a series of articles on the housing question by a Dr. Mülberger in the *Volksstaat*, their central organ, in 1872. Engels protested against this, and responded with a series of polemical articles (1872-73), which were later put out in the form of a pamphlet, *The Housing Question*.

The Mülberger articles, as Engels pointed out, were the first attempt to implant in Germany the Proudhonist views which Marx had rebuffed in his *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

Mülberger, writing in Proudhon's spirit, worked

out a fantastic scheme for doing away with the "bad" sides of capitalism, particularly the housing shortage, without abolishing their source—the capitalist mode of production. He dreamed of making every tenant the owner of his own house, of making all members of society an "aggregate of free and independent houseowners".

Engels exposed the utterly reactionary nature of these petty-bourgeois dreams which sought to reverse the wheel of history, and turn the modern proletariat into a smallholder. He emphasised that "as long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist it is folly to hope for an isolated settlement of the housing question or of any other social question affecting the lot of the workers. The solution lies in the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of all the means of subsistence and instruments of labour by the working class itself".*

And that can be done only by "political action by the proletariat and ... its dictatorship as the transition to the abolition of classes and, with them, of the state—views such as had already been expressed in the *Communist Manifesto* and since then on innumerable occasions".**

The dictatorship of the proletariat not only abolishes all the poverty to which the working class is doomed under capitalism, it also abolishes the antithesis between town and countryside which capitalism has taken to the uttermost limit. The victorious proletarian revolution will deliver the rural population from the isolation and stagnation which it has endured for thousands of years. Exposing the reactionary Proudhonist schemes for preserving small, parcellised farming, Engels declared that the task of the proletariat was to carry on "agriculture on a large scale—the only system

* Marx, Engels,
Collected Works,
Vol. 23, p. 368.

** *Ibid.*, p. 370.

of farming which can utilise all modern facilities, machinery, etc. — by associated workers, and thus demonstrating to the small peasants the advantages of large-scale operation by means of association.” *

He ridiculed Mülberger who held that the antithesis between town and countryside was natural and unavoidable, and that it was utopian to call for its destruction. Not he is utopian who holds that the socialist revolution is necessary and inevitable in order to abolish one or another of the antitheses peculiar to capitalist society, but he who right now wants to see the concrete forms in which these antitheses will be removed. Engels does not say how the housing problem or any other question will be solved concretely in the future socialist society. Even the transitional measures, he pointed out, would vary, depending on the definite and concrete social relations. To attempt to give in advance a prescription suitable for all conditions would be tantamount to substituting quackery for science.

Engels's articles on the housing question put an end to the attempts to implant Proudhonism in Germany. But it was not as easy to overcome the Lassalleian traditions for they were still strong in the General Association of German Workers, and, indeed, also exerted some influence on the Eisenachers.

This came to the surface strikingly at the time of the unification of the two socialist parties in Gotha in 1875.

The basic tactical difference between the two contending parties had now disappeared. With the Franco-Prussian War and the establishment of the German Empire, the idea of unifying Germany from above, through the Prussian monarchy, had triumphed. “It was then that the dispute between

* *Ibid.*, p. 389.

the Lassalleans and the Eisenachers *died down*. It was then too that the question of a general *democratic* revolution in Germany *died down*.” *

In these circumstances, and also because of the urgent need to rally forces against government persecution, the question of uniting the parties, of forming a single Social-Democratic Party of Germany, came to the fore.

In substance, Marx and Engels were not against unification. What they were opposed to was hasty and unprincipled unification. They held that if unity was to be truly enduring, the unification platform should be one of clearly enunciated principles. This was essential if there was to be an effective proletarian mass party. They repeatedly warned the Eisenach leaders, and Liebknecht in particular, against unity “at any price”, which might cause tremendous harm to the German working-class movement.

“The efficient elements among the Lassalleans,” wrote Engels, “will in due course join you of their own accord and it would, therefore, be unwise to break off the fruit before it is ripe, as the unity crowd wants to.... The movement of the proletariat is bound to pass through various stages of development; at every stage part of the people get stuck and do not join in the further advance.” **

Despite these warnings, Liebknecht’s passion for conciliation, of which Marx and Engels had long been aware, took the upper hand once again. At a time when Bebel was in prison, Liebknecht entered into negotiations with the Lassallean leaders. The result was a draft programme designed to serve as the platform for the coming unification. When Marx and Engels received a copy of the draft, which contained substantial concessions to the Lassalleans, they immediately protested to the

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, Moscow, 1986, p. 121.

** Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 268.

party leaders. In a letter to Bebel, who had just been released, Engels protested in his own and in Marx's name against unification on such an unprincipled basis, and proceeded to tear the draft programme to shreds.

The length to which the Eisenach leaders went in their concessions to the Lassalleans may be illustrated by the fact that the programme included the Lassallean ideas of "one reactionary mass" and the "iron law of wages", and the demand for state-aided producers' associations. On the other hand, it said nothing whatever about trade unions and strikes, and about workers' international solidarity. Instead of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it advocated the Lassallean "free people's state".

Criticising the programme, Engels lashed out at the opportunist confusion on the question of the state.

"Since the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, during the revolution, to hold down one's adversaries by force, it is pure nonsense to talk of a free people's state: so long as the proletariat still *uses* the state, it does not use it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist." *

Lenin described this passage in Engels's letter to Bebel as "one of the most, if not *the* most, remarkable observation on the state in the works of Marx and Engels".**

Apparently, Engels's criticism of the draft programme was not sufficiently convincing for some Eisenach leaders. For in a series of letters to the "Londoners", Liebknecht tried to justify his attitude in the negotiations with the Lassalleans. Marx and Engels felt that a still more detailed criticism of

* *Ibid.*, pp. 275-76.

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, Moscow, 1980, p. 444.

the draft was necessary. Marx did the job in what came to be known as the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875).

Marx criticised the false, anti-scientific dogmas of the Lassalleans, and threw light on a number of vital theoretical questions, taking his revolutionary theory a step further.

In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, wrote Lenin, Marx applied his theory “both to the *forthcoming* collapse of capitalism and to the *future* development of *future* communism”.*

It contained an economic analysis of the future society and traced the link between the development of communism and the withering away of the state. In doing so, Marx made an extremely important scientific discovery—the distinction between two phases of communist society, a lower and a higher. The first, the lower phase of communism—usually called socialism—is characterised by social ownership of the means of production, while material benefits are divided according to work done. The worker receives back from society exactly what he has given it, minus the quantity of labour deducted for the expansion of production and the public funds. In the higher phase of communism, when the level of development of the productive forces and the productivity of social labour assure an abundance of goods, the principle of distribution will be: “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.”

The *Critique of the Gotha Programme* formulated in detail the views of Marx and Engels on the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Whereas the *Communist Manifesto* contained the first and still somewhat abstract formulation of the doctrine on the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and whereas after the experience of

* V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 463.

1848-49 Marx spoke about the necessity of “smashing” the bourgeois state machine, in 1871, after the Commune, he posed the question of what concretely should replace it. The *Critique* contains Marx’s well-known statement on the transition period:

“Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.” *

Marx also dwelt on the changes that the proletarian state would undergo during the transition to communist society, and enumerated the conditions for the final withering away of the state.

The *Critique of the Gotha Programme* was another highly important contribution to the Marxist doctrine.

Despite the sharp criticism of Marx and Engels, the draft programme was adopted with minor amendments at the Unity Congress in Gotha. But since the workers attributed to the programme that which it should have contained, and interpreted it in the communist sense, Marx and Engels did not pursue their original intention of opposing it publicly.

Though the merger of the two workers’ political organisations was by itself a positive development, the rotten compromise reached at Gotha was bound to have its negative effects. The greater confusion in matters of theory soon led some of the party leaders to fall for Dühring’s petty-bourgeois socialism.

Berlin University lecturer Dühring’s newly-baked socialist “system” which, as he stridently proclaimed, was to lead to a revolution in philos-

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 26.

ophy, political economy and socialism, was, in effect, a hodge-podge of various already discarded petty-bourgeois theories.

Marx and Engels deemed it necessary to oppose the new social "reformer", for various articles singing his praises had begun to appear in the socialist press. Alarmed, Liebknecht asked the "Londoners" to lose no time and take their stand against Dühring.

So as not to distract Marx from his work on *Capital*, Engels took upon himself the main job of criticising the "dull" Dühring. According to their custom of helping one another in specialised spheres, Marx wrote Chapter X of Part II dealing with political economy. Engels read the whole of the manuscript to his friend before sending it to the printers.

Lizzie, Engels's wife, fell seriously ill during his work on *Anti-Dühring*. She passed away on September 12, 1878. For Engels this was a staggering blow. "My wife," Engels recalled later, "was real Irish proletarian stock, and her ardent inborn feeling for her class was for me worth infinitely more, had at all critical times supported me far more securely, than all the refinements and subtleties of the 'educated' and 'sensitive' daughters of the bourgeoisie." *

At the beginning of 1877, *Vorwärts*, organ of the German Social-Democratic Party, began to print a series of polemic articles by Engels that later came out under separate cover, sarcastically entitled, *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*. The articles upset Dühring's followers in the German Social-Democratic Party. At the Gotha Congress in May 1877, Johann Most and his supporters moved that *Vorwärts* should stop publishing the series, alleging that they were of no interest to

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 38, S. 298.

readers. The Congress, however, decided to continue publishing them, though not in the paper itself but in its science supplement. The series came to an end in the middle of 1878, and in the same year appeared as a separate book, which most people got to know as *Anti-Dühring*.

Since Dühring's "system" embraced a wide sphere of human knowledge, Engels, as he himself put it, had had to deal with every conceivable subject: from the concepts of time and space to bimetallism; from the eternal character of matter and motion to the transient nature of moral ideas; from Darwinian natural selection to the education of the youth in the future society.

"As a result, my negative criticism," Engels wrote, "became positive; the polemic was transformed into a more or less connected exposition of the dialectical method and of the communist world outlook championed by Marx and myself — an exposition covering a fairly comprehensive range of subjects." *

Thus the polemic against Dühring produced a regular Marxist encyclopaedia, a systematic illustration of a wide range of questions related to philosophy, political economy and socialism.

The central idea of the book was its defence of the consistent materialist outlook against any concession to idealism and religion. "Either materialism consistent to the end, or the falsehood and confusion of philosophical idealism — such is the formulation of the question given in *every paragraph of Anti-Dühring*." **

In the struggle against idealist philosophy and also against vulgar materialism, Engels upheld and developed materialist dialectics as a science of the general laws of the development of nature, society and human thought.

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, Moscow, 1987, p. 8.

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, Moscow, 1977, p. 338.

In *Anti-Dühring*, too, Engels elaborated upon a number of new fundamental issues of proletarian revolutionary theory, and in so doing summed up the new experiences gained in the workers' struggle, and also the latest achievements in world science.

He summarised the first results of his studies of theoretical natural science. Taking numerous examples from mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, he showed that "in nature, amid the welter of innumerable changes, the same dialectical laws of motion force their way through as those which in history govern the apparent fortuitousness of events." *

Of the impression that *Anti-Dühring* made on his contemporaries, Engels wrote as follows in 1884: "The book created an unexpectedly strong impression, notably in Russia. It follows that despite the inevitably dull nature of the polemics against an insignificant opponent, this attempt at producing an encyclopaedic account of our understanding of philosophical issues, natural science and history, has had its effect." **

The book fully unfolds the ideological richness of scientific communism, and is a valuable source for studying Marxism, a sharp weapon in the struggle against anti-communists.

An important role in popularising Marxism was played by the pamphlet, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, which Engels put together out of three chapters of *Anti-Dühring*. A popular introduction to the theory of scientific communism, it describes the three sources and three component parts of Marxism—philosophy, political economy and socialism. *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* is still a powerful instrument that helps spread the Marxist vision of the world.

* Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 11.

** Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, S. 136.

Anti-Dühring delivered a blow to the petty-bourgeois elements in the German Social-Democratic Party. Concealing their ignorance behind loud-sounding phrases, they had laid claim to the role of party theoreticians, and gathered round the *Zukunft*, a journal published in Berlin in 1877-78 by philanthropic socialist Karl Höchberg.

Their inimical influence made itself particularly felt in the difficult period that set in for German

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The Last Few Years
with Marx

Herrn Eugen Dühring's

Umwälzung der Wissenschaft.

Philosophie. Politische Ökonomie. Sozialismus.

Von

Friedrich Engels.

Leipzig 1878.

Druck und Verlag der Genossenschafts-Buchdruckerei.

The title page of the
first edition of
Anti-Dühring by Engels

Social-Democracy with the enactment of the Exceptional Law against the Socialists.

The pretext for the law were the two attempts on the life of the German Emperor, with which, it hardly needs saying, the German Social-Democrats had nothing whatever to do.

But the Social-Democrats' successes in the Reichstag elections (their votes rose from 101,000 in 1871 to 493,000 in 1877) had increasingly alarmed the Bismarck government. It was most conscious of the danger that Social-Democracy presented for the ruling classes, whenever the latter were about to launch some offensive against the working people, to raise customs duties and prices on manufactured goods and farm produce. The Anti-Socialist Law, adopted by the Reichstag on October 19, 1878, banned all organisations, newspapers, and associations engaged in socialist propaganda; a special paragraph empowered the authorities to proclaim martial law, etc.

Owing to this sharp turn in the attitude of the ruling classes, the Social-Democratic Party had had to take its bearings in short order, adapt its tactics to the new situation, and reconstruct its ranks. Abrupt changes of this nature are a serious and hard test for a party.

But, as experience showed, the party was unprepared for it and found wanting.

Its leadership collapsed even before the law was enacted. Instead of immediately establishing an underground organisation and an underground newspaper, the Central Election Committee in Hamburg, which was the party's acting executive at the time, announced its dissolution, and also called for the dissolution of local party organisations. At a time when reaction was raining blows upon the party, the membership was left without

a centre, without guidance and help, without contacts, and without a tactical and organisational plan. The absence of staunchness, firmness, and revolutionary zeal, and the failure to appreciate the necessity of switching to underground struggle as the answer to the Exceptional Law, led inevitably to the party's disintegration. Some Social-Democratic deputies, instead of using the Reichstag, the sole remaining legal outlet, for revolutionary propaganda, merely pleaded for annulment of the law. Marx and Engels instantly protested against these opportunist tactics and against the law-abiding statements in the Reichstag designed to appease the German philistines.

Seeking to direct the tactics of the party leaders along the revolutionary path worthy of a workers' party, they pinned their hopes chiefly on the working masses of Germany. In his letters, Engels repeatedly said that in the German movement "all the mistakes made by the leadership were always corrected by the masses. And so it will be this time, too".*

And indeed, the party rank-and-file led by August Bebel gradually began to re-establish the broken contacts and to build an underground organisation. Thanks to this grassroot initiative, and also as a result of merciless criticism by Marx and Engels, the best of the party leaders who had panicked at the time of the enactment of the Anti-Socialist Law, began to straighten out their line.

The leadership, which in the early stages of the law had done nothing to establish an underground paper, and had even hindered the circulation of *Freiheit* and *Laterne*, newspapers published abroad on the initiative of individual Social-Democrats, were now forced to set about founding an underground publication.

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 34, S. 442.

But great was the indignation of Marx and Engels when they learned that the leading core of the paper would be Höchberg, Bernstein and Schramm, already known to the "Londoners" from the journal *Zukunft*. Engels, writing also on behalf of Marx, immediately protested to Bebel against the editorial board and withdrew their previous promise to collaborate.

Their indignation grew still more when they received the first number of the *Jahrbuch für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* which Höchberg had begun to publish in Switzerland. It contained an article with three asterisks in lieu of the signature. The article came from "Three Zürichers", Höchberg, Bernstein and Schramm. These people, who before this had preached social philanthropy, now moved further to the Right and voiced outright opportunist and defeatist views.

On September 17-18, 1879, Engels, in his own name and in the name of Marx, addressed a Circular Letter to Bebel, Liebknecht, Bracke and other leading party members, ruthlessly criticising "the Manifesto of the Three Zürichers".

The letter characterised the stand of the "Three Zürichers" in the following terms: "Instead of determined political opposition, general mediation; instead of struggle against government and bourgeoisie, an attempt to win over and persuade them; instead of defiant resistance to ill-treatment from above, humble acquiescence and admission that the punishment was deserved." *

The "Three Zürichers" tried to justify their defeatist policy with theoretic considerations. Their article developed on the thought that the workers had nothing whatever to do with the final aims of the party, that they were interested merely in immediate practical matters, and that hence it was neces-

* Marx, and Engels,
Selected Correspondence, p. 305.

sary to advance slowly from "station to station" and to say nothing about the final destination. In this article we find the substance of the notorious formula later proclaimed by Bernstein: "The movement is everything, the final aim — nothing."

Engels ridiculed them for accepting the party programme not for the purpose of carrying it out in their lifetime, but of bequeathing it to their children and grandchildren. He branded them as typical representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, who, dreading proletarian revolution, advised the party to follow the path of legality, i. e., of *reform*. Their way, said Engels, meant simply propping up the capitalist system by patchwork reforms.

In their "Circular Letter" Marx and Engels not only denounced the openly opportunist views of Höchberg, Bernstein and Schramm, but also the conciliatory attitude adopted towards them by the party leadership.

"As for ourselves," they wrote, "in view of our whole past there is only one road open to us. For almost forty years we have emphasised that class struggle is the immediate driving power of history, and in particular that the class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat is the great lever of the modern social revolution; we, therefore, cannot possibly co-operate with people who wish to expunge this class struggle from the movement.... If the new Party organ adopts a line that corresponds to the views of these gentlemen, that is middle class and not proletarian, then nothing remains for us, much though we should regret it, but publicly to declare our opposition to it, and to dissolve the bonds of the solidarity with which we have hitherto represented the German Party abroad. But it is to be hoped that things will not come to *such* a pass." *

* *Ibid.*, p. 307.

And they did not. The devastating criticism and the categorical ultimatum sent by Marx and Engels had their effect. Editorship of the *Sozialdemokrat*, which began to be published in Zurich, was entrusted to Georg Vollmar. But under him, too, the new paper did not display a firm line and for this reason was suspect both by the party membership and by Marx and Engels. Thereupon Vollmar was replaced by Bernstein, who had managed to win first Bebel's and then also Engels's trust. That the *Sozialdemokrat* became a revolutionary organ, the party owed to Engels, who watched Bernstein's activity closely, and constantly instructed him, especially after the paper's offices were moved from Switzerland to London. After Engels's death, Bernstein, who became a theorist of revisionism, admitted that during Engels's lifetime he had written things contrary to his convictions.

At the time of the Exceptional Law, Engels also came to grips with the right wing of the Social-Democratic group in the Reichstag, which tended to attack the party line from time to time.

Engels chastised these people, who looked on the party as a milch cow and would not reconcile themselves to the fact that, with the banning of the legal Social-Democratic press, they had lost their literary incomes.

To the cowardly and disgraceful tactics of these people, Engels counterposed the revolutionary tactics of the proletariat: "Not to twist and turn under the blows of the opponent, not to whine and moan and stammer excuses that you did not mean any harm as so many still do. Hit back, that's what you have to do, two or three blows for every one the enemy strikes. That has always been our tactic and so far I believe we have got the best of almost every one of our opponents." *

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 35, S. 425.

Marx and Engels called upon the leadership of the party and its central organ to watch the opportunists in the parliamentary group who sought to transform the proletarian revolutionary party into a petty-bourgeois, philistine party of reform. Marx and Engels prepared the party's leaders for the inevitable break with these "bourgeois-minded elements". They advised careful judgement of the situation so as to choose the most favourable moment for the split. "This split must be so carried out that we continue to lead the old party and that they either leave or be expelled." *

The question of rupture became particularly acute in 1884 when the majority of the Social-Democratic deputies in the Reichstag, pleading the cultural importance of international contacts, declared their intention of voting for subsidies for the new steamship lines, i. e., in effect, for Bismarck's colonial policy. This action forced Engels to put the question of rupture on a practical plane and to give concrete instructions to Bebel concerning the party's stand after the split. Although this time matters ended with the Right wing retreating, Engels, nevertheless, continually warned the party about the inevitability and necessity of a complete break with the opportunists.

Simultaneously with the struggle against Right opportunism in the German Social-Democratic movement, Marx and Engels also came to grips with the so-called leftists, those revolutionary phrasemongers.

"Left" opportunism during the period of the Exceptional Law is associated with the name of Johann Most, editor of the London-based *Freiheit*.

Most, who at first maintained distinctly moderate tone in the paper, soon made a complete "Left" turn. While criticising the opportunist mistakes of

* *Ibid.*, Bd. 36, S. 155.

the party group in the Reichstag, he himself went to the other extreme—denying the necessity of parliamentary action and of using legal opportunities. This anarchistic attack on parliamentarism differed completely from the criticism of Marx and Engels who wanted to use the Reichstag for revolutionary propaganda and for rallying the masses.

Most launched a violent campaign in his paper against all the leaders of the party. As Marx put it, this was “not simply an attack on individuals, it was blackening the *entire German working-class movement*”.* While chastising the party leaders, Most was unable to put forward any positive programme of action. Marx and Engels criticised Most because instead of a revolutionary content his paper was filled with revolutionary phrases.

Most’s anarchistic criticism of parliamentarism soon led to his breaking with the party. In September 1879, he suggested forming a new party. At the same time he revised his theoretical views and advanced further along the road to anarchism.

Hasselman, one of the Social-Democratic deputies in the Reichstag, followed in his footsteps.

At the first underground congress, held in Wyden in 1880, Most and Hasselman were expelled from the party. The same congress deleted from the Gotha Programme the paragraph which declared that the party would achieve its aims by “all lawful means”, thereby recognising the need for illegal as well as legal work.

Analysing the roots of the opportunism in German Social-Democracy, Marx and Engels pointed to the numerous German petty bourgeoisie, to its petty philistine spirit, which, in Engels’s words, was “a sister to servility and submissiveness and to all the hereditary German vices.”**

Combating all kinds of opportunism, both in the

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 34, S. 474.

** *Ibid.*, Bd. 35, S. 443.

sphere of theory and in practice, Marx and Engels helped the German Social-Democrats in elaborating their tactical and organisational plans in the complicated conditions of the Exceptional Law, helped them take the correct, revolutionary way. Among other things, they helped with articles in the press against Bismarck's policies and in defence of the party. In their letters they called on socialists in other countries to extend moral and material support to the German Social-Democrats.

The period of the Anti-Socialist Law was a revolutionary school for members of the German Social-Democratic Party. The party's ranks grew more solid, and its influence increased. In fact, the period from 1878 to 1890 is rightly considered a heroic time in the history of the Social-Democratic movement in Germany.

Marx and Engels devoted very close attention to the working-class movement in Germany, but they also followed the movement in other countries, especially in England and France. Here, as in Germany, they schooled people who could be the nucleus of workers' parties, and trained them patiently to become leaders of the masses.

They carefully studied the conditions in which the workers' movement developed in France after the defeat of the Paris Commune, and also its intrinsic processes.

A favourable feature, as Engels pointed out, was that the experience of the Commune had delivered a mortal blow to the different petty-bourgeois theories which had formerly prevailed in the French working-class movement—Proudhonism, Blanquism, and others. This made it easier for the workers to reject the old specific French socialism and to take up Marxism, the scientific theory of the international proletariat.





SOCIALISME
POPIQUE
SOCIALISME
POPIQUE

zur Wohnungsfrage.



LA EMANCIPACION

Der Sozialdemokrat

Das Kapital

Vollkommen Revolution



But now, too, Marxism still had to fight its way to the working masses in France. The road was still blocked by various opportunist and anarchist elements who continued to peddle the old theories, though practice had proved them useless.

There were people, however, such as the French opportunists Benoît Malon and Paul Brousse, who opposed the founders of the Workers' Party Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue—on the spurious grounds that they were the mouthpieces of Marx. When Guesde submitted a programme for the party whose theoretical part had been dictated to him by Marx, the fury of these people knew no bounds.

Engels tells us in one of his letters how this programme was drawn up: "Guesde came over when it was a question of framing the *draft* programme of the French Workers' Party. Its preamble was dictated to him word for word by Marx in the presence of Lafargue and myself right here in my room: the worker is free only when he is the owner of his instruments of labour—this can be the case either in individual or in collective form; the individual form of ownership is made obsolete by the economic development, and more so with every day; hence there remains only that of collective ownership, etc.,—a masterpiece of cogent argumentation rarely encountered and clearly and succinctly written for the masses; I myself was astonished by this concise formulation. The rest of the programme's contents was then discussed; here and there we put something in or took something out. But how little Guesde was the mouthpiece of Marx is betrayed by Guesde's insistence on putting in his foolish minimum wage demand." *

This programme, true in a somewhat messed up form, was adopted at the Havre Congress of the

Workers' Party in October 1880. Marx regarded this as a sign of the birth of the first real workers' movement in France.

But the opportunist elements in the party, headed by Malon and Brousse, mounted a campaign against the programme and against the party's organisational principles. They advanced the Bakuninist slogan of "autonomy", demanding that each branch of the party should have the right to amend the programme and "adapt" it to local conditions. Rejecting the end goals of the party, they suggested the inclusion of only those demands which were manageable in the given conditions. Guesde and Lafargue firmly opposed this reformist "*politique des possibilités*", and the consequent negation of the class nature of the party with a view to "catching votes".

The struggle waged by Guesde and Lafargue against the Possibilists met with the approval and support of Marx and Engels. They, however, did not hesitate to criticise the mistakes made by Guesde and Lafargue, who, while carrying out a generally correct line, were inclined to be dogmatic and sectarian, and displayed a lack of flexibility in their tactics.

When in 1882 the split took place at the St. Etienne Congress between the Guesde followers and the Possibilists, Marx and Engels described it as a step in the direction of a proletarian party. From this split Engels drew the exceedingly important conclusion about the objective laws governing the development of working-class parties under capitalism, and about the struggle in them of two tendencies—the revolutionary and opportunist. "It seems," he wrote, "that *every* workers' party of a big country can develop only through internal struggle, which accords with the laws of dialectical

• Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence, p. 324.

development in general.”* In support of his contention, he cited the fight in Germany of the Eisenachers against Lassalleans, and in France of the Guesde followers against the Possibilists. He urged purging the proletarian parties of opportunists who endeavoured to turn them into petty-bourgeois reformist parties.

This profound thought about the law-governed development of proletarian parties under capitalism gave further substance to the idea that the party is the vanguard of the proletariat, which was first advanced by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* and which they subsequently developed and supplemented with reference to the experience of the revolutions of 1848-49, the still richer experience of the International, the Paris Commune and, lastly, the experience gained in founding socialist parties in different countries.

If in France, where the working class was surrounded by a dense petty-bourgeois mass, the creation of a proletarian party was accompanied by acute internal struggle, the difficulties in establishing a workers' party in England were greater still.

The English working-class movement, whose Chartists had given the world a model of the first independent political movement of the proletariat, and which after a period of decline appeared once more in the arena of broad class struggle under the leadership of the International, had again, as Engels put it, withdrawn to the narrow confines of economic struggle and “immersed in all the details of trade union rubbish”.** The trade union leaders opposed independent political action by the proletariat, thus playing into the hands of the English bourgeoisie.

Elaborating on his analysis made in the 1850s of the reasons for the victory of opportunism in the

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 35, S. 374.
** *Ibid.*, Bd. 34, S. 236.

English working-class movement, Engels wrote to Bebel in 1883:

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The Last Few Years
with Marx

"Do not on any account whatever let yourself be bamboozled into thinking there is a real proletarian movement going on here.... The elements at present active may become important now, since they have accepted our theoretical programme and so acquired a basis, but only if a spontaneous movement breaks out here among the workers and they succeed in getting control of it. Till then they will remain individual minds with a hotchpotch of confused sects, remnants of the great movement of the forties, standing behind them, and nothing more. And apart from the unexpected — a really general workers' movement will come into existence here only when it is brought home to the workers that England's world monopoly is broken. The fact that they participate in the domination of the world market was and is the economic basis of the political nullity of the English workers." *

Owing to the growing competition of Germany and the United States, Britain had begun losing her industrial monopoly. Still, exploitation of the colonies enabled the English capitalists, who were amassing tremendous profits, to improve the condition of the privileged minority of the proletariat and also throw crumbs now and again to the mass of workers. This furthered the spread of opportunist illusions about the possibility of radically improving the condition of the workers in the framework of capitalist society.

Marx and Engels held that another of the reasons for the backwardness of the workers' movement in England was the English workers' dislike for any kind of theory, which enabled the capitalists to keep them under their ideological influence.

* Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence, pp. 343-44.

Working for a mass proletarian party in England, they maintained contact with the workers, acquainted them with Marxist theory, and popularised it in the papers. In 1881, for example, Engels wrote a series of articles for the trade union newspaper, *The Labour Standard*, which, in simple terms, showed the English workers the insufficiency of economic struggle alone, and the necessity for a workers' party aiming at abolishing capitalist exploitation.

"The working class," Engels wrote in one of the articles, "remains what it was, and what our Chart-ist forefathers were not afraid to call it, a class of wage slaves. Is this to be the final result of all this labour, self-sacrifice and suffering? Is this to remain for ever the highest aim of British workmen? Or is the working class of this country at last to attempt breaking through this vicious circle, and to find an issue out of it in a movement for the *abolition of the wage system altogether*?"* *

In the article headed "A Working Men's Party", Engels showed the English proletariat that their political role was unworthy of the best organised working class in Europe, that they were acting merely as an appendage to the bourgeois Liberal Party. He used the example of the movement on the Continent to illustrate the importance of creating an independent workers' party in England, and the necessity of the working-class struggle to win political power.

In the article "Social Classes—Necessary and Superfluous", he explained that the working class could quite easily run the big branches of industry without the capitalists, that the presence of the capitalist was becoming increasingly harmful.

Marx and Engels had a knack for spotting the basic shortcomings in the workers' movement of

* Engels, *The Wage System*, Moscow, 1984, p. 16.

a country, and pinpointing the obstacles for socialism to merge with the working-class movement. Working for genuine proletarian parties in different countries, they showed the working class there the decisive link it should seize to pull out the whole chain.

"From the scientific point of view, we have here a sample of materialist dialectics, the ability to bring to the forefront and stress the various points, the various aspects of the problem, in application to the specific features of different political and economic conditions. From the point of view of the practical policy and tactics of the workers' party, we have here a sample of the way in which the creators of the *Communist Manifesto* defined the tasks of the fighting proletariat in accordance with the different stages of the national working-class movements in the different countries." *

That was why the finest representatives of the workers' movement in all countries always turned to Marx and Engels for help and advice at crucial moments. The authority and trust that Marx and Engels enjoyed in the workers' movement secured them the role of recognised leaders of the advanced elements of the world proletariat.

In addition to guiding the workers' movement, the two friends continued their theoretical studies, which they regarded as a vital component of their party work. "Marx and myself," wrote Engels to Johann Philipp Becker, "have to do definite scientific work which, so far, we are bound to say, nobody else can or wants to do. We must utilise the present period of calm in world history in order to finish this work, ... in order to develop at least a little the important theoretical side of the movement." **

Marx continued his work on *Capital*. But now

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, Moscow, 1977, p. 362.

** Marx, Engels, *Werke*. Bd. 34, S. 227.

he had to interrupt it more and more frequently owing to his illness.

His conscientiousness, his self-critical attitude, and the striving theoretically to generalise everything new observed in life—all this impelled Marx to turn again and again to the basic problems of his work. Every one of the theoretical generalisations in *Capital* was based on a study of prolific literature and immense factual material.

A striking example of this is the way he worked on the section on ground rent in Volume III. For this section, he made a thorough study of land relations in Russia following the abolition of serfdom there in 1861. Through his Russian friends, Danielson, the translator of *Capital*, Professor Kovalevsky, and others, he received considerable statistical material and books which he carefully studied, intending to utilise the results of the research when rewriting the section on ground rent. In this section, according to Engels, Russia was to have played the same part that England played in Volume I in the examination of industrial wage labour. Marx, however, was not fated to carry out his plan.

Engels, meanwhile, was preoccupied popularising and defending Marxism. Also, he continued his study of the natural sciences. He had begun it, in fits and starts, while still in Manchester, and after the Hague Congress started an examination of the dialectics of nature. He completed the "Introduction", but had to put it aside in view of the urgency of producing a critique of the writings of Dühring. Upon completing *Anti-Dühring*, he returned to his study of dialectics, wrote almost all the chapters and made considerable notes and sketches. But after the death of Marx it was again laid aside with the result that it remained unfinished.*

Although unfinished, the *Dialectics of Nature* is.

* The full text of *Dialectics of Nature* was first published in 1925 in the U.S.S.R., in German and Russian.

from the standpoint of theory, a work of profound and rich thought.

In the "Introduction", which is a brilliant essay on the development of natural science from the Renaissance to Darwin, Engels showed how the dialectical conception of nature made its way to the fore in struggle against the metaphysical outlook. He stressed the role of practice, the role of production, which in the final analysis, determined the development of science.

The *Dialectics of Nature* contains philosophically generalised conclusions of natural science in Engels's day. It shows that everything in nature takes place dialectically and that, consequently, the only correct method of knowing nature is materialist dialectics.

Tracing the different forms of the motion of matter, their unity, interplay and qualitative peculiarities, Engels laid the foundation for the dialectico-materialist classification of the natural sciences.

Criticising the idealists and the vulgar materialists, combating metaphysics and crude empiricism, Engels set forth the natural scientific basis of dialectical materialism. In all branches of natural science and mathematics, he came to grips with the adherents of the old and supported everything new and progressive in the science of his day.

Examining the state of the natural sciences from the standpoint of the most advanced and most revolutionary world outlook – dialectical materialism — he looked far into the future and advanced fruitful scientific hypotheses which anticipated a number of subsequent scientific discoveries. For example, in contrast to the majority of contemporary scientists, he upheld the view about the complexity of the atom, that it was something more

than the tiniest particle of matter. And, as we know, this view was confirmed.

In his essay, *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*, he showed the decisive role played by labour in moulding the human organism, in the inception of language and the emergence of human society.

In his *Dialectics of Nature*, the result of extensive research, Engels was the first to apply materialist dialectics to the study of nature. Although where he touches on physics, chemistry and biology, which have made rapid strides since then, some of the points he made have lost validity, his *Dialectics of Nature* retains its scientific and philosophical value to this day.

On March 14, 1883, after a grave illness, Karl Marx died. Engels was deeply shaken by his death.

On the evening of March 14, he cabled his friends and colleagues about the terrible loss suffered by the international socialist movement. "Though I have seen him this evening laid out in his bed, the rigidity of death in his face," he wrote to Liebknecht, "my mind rebels at the thought that this brilliant mind has ceased to enrich the proletarian movement of both worlds with its powerful thought. What we all are we owe to him; what the present-day movement is it owes to his theoretical and practical work. If it were not for him, we should still be immersed in confusion, still groping in the dark." *

To Johann Philipp Becker, he wrote: "The greatest mind in our Party had ceased to think, the strongest heart I have ever known had ceased to beat." **

His message to Sorge read: "Mankind is shorter by a head, and that the greatest head of our time." ***

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 35, S. 457.

** *Ibid.*, S. 458.

*** Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 340.

The death of Marx was a double blow to Engels. He had lost not only the brilliant leader of the movement to which he had devoted his whole life. He had also lost his second "self", the companion of his entire conscious life, his most faithful friend and comrade.

Marx was buried at Highgate Cemetery in London on March 17, 1883, at the side of his wife, who had died more than a year before. In a touching funeral oration, Engels described Marx's great scientific exploit and his selfless, heroic life as a fighter for the cause of the proletariat, of all the working people and the oppressed. He finished his speech with the prophetic words: "His name will endure through the ages, and so also will his work!" *

At this, the most difficult period of his life, Engels never lost heart, never bowed to fate.

In a letter to Johann Philipp Becker on the day after Marx's death, he wrote: "You and I are now almost the last of the old guard of 1848. Well, we'll remain in the breach. The bullets are whistling, our friends are falling round us, but this is not the first time we two have seen this. And if the bullet hits one of us, let it come—I only ask that it should strike fair and square and not leave us long in agony." **

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 163.
 ** Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 35, S. 458.

X. Adviser and Leader of Europe's Socialists

During Marx's lifetime Engels had done everything that lay in his power to help his friend write *Capital*. Now, his own studies were unhesitatingly laid aside. The remainder of his life, he devoted to completing the work which had been interrupted by Marx's illness and death.

Above all, it was necessary to publish the manuscript of Volume II of *Capital*, concerning which Marx had, shortly before his death, told his daughter Eleanor that Engels should "do something with it". Then came the turn of Volume III and, lastly, the rough manuscript of Volume IV (*Theories of Surplus Value*), to say nothing of a number of Marx's lesser works.

In undertaking to do this in the sixty-third year of his life, Engels was never free of the worry that he might not be able to see the thing through. He had to decipher Marx's illegible handwriting, get to the bottom of things, and join the manuscripts in one whole—a job that nobody else could hope to cope with.

When, soon after Marx's death, illness confined Engels to his bed for almost six months, preventing him from working on *Capital*, he wrote to Pyotr Lavrov:

"I am all the more worried because I am *the only one alive* who can decipher this handwriting and these abbreviations of words and sentences." * To make up for the lost time, he sat up nights arranging and transcribing the manuscripts. The result was that his illness returned. He then resorted, as

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, S. 99.

he put it, "to heroic means": hiring a scribe to whom, while lying on a couch, he dictated every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

But this was only part of the work. And by no means the most important or difficult. Much original writing had to be put in. The manuscript of Volume II contained two complete and six incomplete versions. Along with the parts of the manuscript written out in full there were others, equally important, that had just been sketched in. The manuscript had to be studied minutely, and edited in places. In the Preface to Volume II of *Capital* Engels pointed out that he had endeavoured to do his task "exclusively in the spirit of the author".*

He completed this volume in February 1885, and dispatched it to the printers.

Thereupon, Engels at once began dictating the third volume. It contained some conclusive judgments, he wrote, and would make a complete revolution in all economic science. It was "superlative, brilliant. This revolution in the old economic science is truly unprecedented. It is thanks to this alone that our theory has acquired an unshakable foundation and that we are enabled to fight victoriously on all fronts." **

The final editing of Volume III called for tremendous energy. The material had to be put in order and rearranged. Some additions, too, were to be made, notably about some new developments in capitalist economics.

Engels carried out his work on the invaluable manuscripts of his friend with the greatest care. For him they were a source of the greatest scientific pleasure. Handling the manuscripts "will take a lot of work," he confided to Johann Philipp Becker, "because in the case of a man like Marx every word is worth its weight in gold. But for me the job will

* Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1986, p. 5.

** Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, S. 293-94.

be a pleasure, for I will again be with my old friend." *

Concerning Engels's immense complicated job of preparing the second and third volumes of *Capital* for the press, Lenin wrote: "These two volumes of *Capital* are the work of two men: Marx and Engels." **

Something like ten years were needed to prepare Volume III for the printers. Not only because of the scale and complexity of the task, and not only because of Engels's failing eyesight. He was burdened with other work. Along with editing the English translation of Volume I of *Capital*, which he finished in 1886, he had to prepare new editions of Volumes I and II, as well as new editions and translations of other works by Marx (*The Poverty of Philosophy*, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, *The Civil War in France*, *The Class Struggles in France*, and others), and also works of his own and to provide them with prefaces.

Writing to Johann Philipp Becker of the enormous amount of editing he had to do of translations of Marx's works, Engels observed: "This can be taken as proof of how widely our communism has spread internationally; that is why I am always pleased if I can help to spread it still wider." ***

During the twelve years which Engels lived after the death of Marx, he wrote a large number of articles and published two books which are of great theoretical importance. One of these — *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, written in 1884 — he regarded as the "fulfilment", to a certain extent, of "a bequest" by Marx. Marx had, indeed, made an abstract of Lewis Morgan's *Ancient Society*, supplying it with critical notes of his own. Evidently, he had intended to write on the

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, S. 28.

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1986, p. 26.

*** Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, S. 400-01.

subject himself. Upon reading Marx's notes and Morgan's book, and seeing their significance, Engels got down to work. He involved a considerable quantity of other material. The result was a fundamental study.

Lenin described the *Origin of the Family* as "one of the fundamental works of modern socialism". In it, he said, "every sentence ... can be accepted with confidence, in the assurance that it has not been

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Das Kapital.

Kritik der politischen Oekonomie.

Von

Karl Marx.

Zweiter Band.

Buch II: Der Cirkulationsprocess des Kapitals.

Herausgegeben von Friedrich Engels.

Das Recht der Uebersetzung ist vorbehalten.

Hamburg
Verlag von Otto Meissner.
1885.

The title page of the
second volume of
Marx's *Capital*

said at random but is based on immense historical and political material".* It marked a big stride forward in the elaboration of the materialist conception of history, and of a number of problems of scientific communism. Engels examined the remote past of human society, laid the foundations for a Marxist study of ancient history, and of the origin of the family and the stages and forms of its development. Engels's investigation of the origin and development of the various forms of property is exceedingly valuable. He refutes the bourgeois economists and sociologists who claim that private property is eternal, and shows that it did not exist until a definite stage in the history of human society. Private property attained its highest and fullest degree of development under capitalism, and became an obstacle to man's further progress. It is torn down by the social revolution of the proletariat, which abolishes private ownership of the means of production and makes the passage to common communistic property. This is the dialectics of history.

Engels laid bare the false bourgeois theories about the supra-class character of the state and adduced historical facts to prove that in antagonistic class society the state is a weapon in the hands of the ruling class for the suppression and exploitation of the oppressed classes. The state of slave-owners existed for crushing the slaves, in feudal times it was the instrument whereby the nobility kept down the feudal serfs, while the bourgeois state is a weapon for the exploitation of wage labour by capital. And this is true even for the most democratic of bourgeois republics, where "wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely. On the one hand, in the form of the direct corruption of officials, of which America provides the

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, Moscow, 1977, p. 473.

classical example; on the other hand, in the form of an alliance between government and Stock Exchange, which becomes the easier to achieve the more the public debt increases and the more joint-stock companies concentrate in their hands not only transport, but also production itself, using the Stock Exchange as their centre.” *

Since history has known periods when classes did not as yet exist, and, consequently, when there was no state, then inevitably, a new and higher level of development would arrive when the state will cease to exist. Engels wrote that classes “will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them the state will inevitably fall. Society, which will reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze axe.” **

Engels's deep-going study of the origin of the state and of its class character, and of how it would wither away, added up to a new stage in the elaboration of the Marxist theory of the state.

Another outstanding scholarly exploit was Engels's *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, which appeared in 1888. Based on a series of critical articles in *Neue Zeit* in 1886 devoted to Carl Starcke's book on Feuerbach, it set forth the Marxist attitude to its philosophical predecessors. Hegelian philosophy and the doctrine of Feuerbach are given due credit; the reader learns of the influence which they exerted on Marx and himself. At the same time, the defects of Hegel's idealist philosophy and the limitations of Feuerbach's materialism are demonstrated. Engels showed the substance of the revolutionary overturn in philosophy achieved by dialectical and historical mate-

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 329.
** *Ibid.*, p. 330.

rialism, and emphasised the fundamental difference between Marxism and all preceding philosophical doctrines.

Engels's letters on historical materialism sent to Ernst, Bloch, Mehring, Borgius and others, are likewise of considerable theoretical interest. They take to task the vulgarisers of historical materialism who asserted that the economic factor was the sole active factor in the historical process and that the political and ideological superstructure was merely a passive consequence exerting no influence whatever upon history. This vulgarisation of Marxism led to a fatalistic conception of history as an automatic process taking place without, and apart from, people. In his letters, Engels showed that there were no automatically operating economic factors, that people made their own history and that in the historical process the economic conditions were the determinants only in the final analysis.

"According to the materialist conception of history," he wrote to Joseph Bloch on September 21-22, 1890, "the *ultimately* determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure — political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems

of dogmas — also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form*.” *

The idea that the superstructure, including state authority, exerts a reverse influence on the economy, is examined in the letter to Schmidt. “Why do we fight for the political dictatorship of the proletariat,” Engels asked, “if political power is economically impotent?” **

Engels was indignant with the newly-baked “Marxists” who all too often thought they had fully understood the new theory and could apply it without more ado from the moment they mastered some of its main principles, and those not even always correctly.

In his letters on historical materialism, Engels elaborated upon, and made more specific, the Marxist theory of society.

Though he attached immense importance to the theoretical side of the class struggle, he saw no one at the time who could have stepped into the breach left by Marx and himself in the field of theory. Yet he failed to complete what he had planned — to finish the capital scientific works that he had begun, and to prepare for the printer the manuscript of the fourth volume of *Capital* (*Theories of Surplus Value*). Neither did he manage to return to his research in the history of Ireland and to his *Dialectics of Nature*. Other books, too, which he intended writing, never saw the light of day. Among them a pamphlet in German on the role of force in history. This was to include, in addition to three chapters from *Anti-Dühring*, a fourth, specially written chapter on the role of force in Germany from 1848 onward. The pamphlet was left unfinished.

Engels also intended writing a detailed life of Marx, a history of the German socialist movement

* K. Marx and
F. Engels, *Selected
Works*, Vol. 3, p. 487.
** *Ibid.*, p. 494.

in the period from 1843 to 1863, and a history of the First International. Instead, he was only able to write a short biography of Marx, and a few articles and prefaces ("On the History of the Communist League", "Marx and the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*", etc.), in which he described the first period of his joint struggle with Marx for the proletarian party.

And this is understandable if we bear in mind Engels's enormous labour in guiding the international proletarian movement.

In the preface to Volume III of *Capital* Engels explained why his work on it had taken so long; he wrote that with the growth of the international working-class movement his help was needed much more often than he would have liked in view of his theoretical studies. "But if a man has been active in the movement for more than fifty years, as I have been, he regards the work connected with it as a bounden duty that brooks no delay." *

Engels was deeply conscious of the responsibility which lay on his shoulders now that he had to replace Marx both in the sphere of theory and in giving practical political guidance.

"All my life," he wrote to Johann Philipp Becker, "I have done what I was cut out to do — I played second fiddle — and I think that I did it fairly well. I was glad to have so splendid a first violin as Marx. And now that I am unexpectedly called upon to replace Marx in theoretical matters and play first fiddle, I cannot do so without making slips of which nobody is more keenly aware than I. But it is not until stormier times come that we shall really appreciate what we have lost in Marx. None of us has that breadth of vision with which he, whenever it was necessary to act quickly, did the right thing and tackled the decisive issue. True, in

* Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1986, p. 2.

peaceful times it sometimes happened that events proved me right, but at revolutionary moments his judgment was all but unassailable.” *

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To appreciate how great and complicated was the task of guiding the international socialist movement at that time, one should bear in mind the scale on which it had spread and the variety of conditions and the nature of the struggle in different countries. In guiding the socialist parties, which had arisen in many European countries, Engels, in addition to the general features, always took into account the specific distinctions of the working-class movement in each country. He stressed the role Marxism played as the sole international doctrine, stood up for its basic principles, and for the significance of the common objective laws governing the working-class movement despite the variety of its specific forms and tactics from country to country. He made a close study of each country, followed the growing socialist press, wrote leading articles for the newspapers, engaged in a vast correspondence with socialists in different countries, acted as go-between for them, and received numerous visitors at his home in London.

“After the death of Marx”, wrote Lenin, “Engels continued alone to be the counsellor and leader of the European socialists. His advice and directions were sought for equally by the German socialists, whose strength, despite government persecution, grew rapidly and steadily, and by representatives of backward countries, such as the Spaniards, Romanians and Russians, who were obliged to ponder and weigh their first steps. They all drew on the rich store of knowledge and experience of Engels in his old age.” **

Giving advice and directions, Engels firmly insisted on them being carried out. He followed the ac-

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, S. 218-19.

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 26.

tivity of each party with a keen eye, and interfered, when necessary, to correct its line. He fought on two fronts, as it were — against reformists, on the one hand, and against petty-bourgeois ultra-revolutionaries, on the other.

In the English and American socialist movements he sharply criticised their isolation from the workers, their sectarianism, dogmatism and inability to fit Marxist theory to the concrete conditions of their countries.

Engels took into account the special conditions in England and America, where, for a number of economic and political reasons, the proletariat had shown practically no signs of political independence, tagging along in the wake of the bourgeoisie who were past masters at deceiving, bribing, and corrupting the workers.

The main task of the socialists in these countries was to awaken the workers politically, to organise them on a theoretical basis at least solid enough to end the bourgeois influence.

That is why Engels criticised the socialists in America, who were mostly German refugees, for having turned scientific communism into dead dogma, and trying to ram it down the throat of the backward American workers who were indifferent to any theory.

"The Germans do not know how to use their theory as a lever to set the American masses in motion; most of them do not understand the theory themselves and treat it in a doctrinaire and dogmatic way as something that has got to be learnt by heart and which will then satisfy all requirements without more ado. To them it is a credo and not a guide to action." *

Since the Germans did not understand the conditions and nature of the American working-class

* Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence, p. 373.

movement, their propaganda, naturally, met with no success. Taking into account the specific features of the American workers' movement and its level of development, Engels counselled the socialists in America to support every first, even though immature, step of the workers to establish their own organisations. He drew attention to the Knights of Labour, who, notwithstanding their confused principles (abstention from politics, their hopes of "replacing the system of wage labour by a co-operative industrial system," etc.), were an important organisation.

Engels held that the American socialists should follow the tactics Marx and he had used during 1845-48, "go in for any real general working-class movement, accept its actual starting point as such, and work it gradually up to the theoretical level by pointing out how every mistake made, every reverse suffered, was a necessary consequence of mistaken theoretical views in the original programme; they ought, in the words of the *Communist Manifesto*, to represent in the movement of the present the future of that movement." *

A somewhat similar situation prevailed in the socialist movement in England. Here, in the 1880s, the working-class movement had at last begun to show signs of life. The socio-economic reason for this was England's gradual loss of her former industrial monopoly owing to the competition of US and German goods. The economic depression worsened the condition of the mass of lower-paid workers. However, despite the rise of the mass movement in the early half of the 1880s, the socialist organisations consisted of warring sects lacking any real influence among the workers. Their leaders were, as Engels put it, generals without armies.

* *Ibid.*, p. 377.

In England, too, Engels did his best to train theoretically knowledgeable Marxists linked with the mass workers' movement and capable of laying the foundations of a real working-class party. He fought the opportunist Social-Democratic Federation, which was trying to monopolise the socialist movement in the country, and its leader, Hyndman, whom Engels considered, and rightly so as it developed, an unprincipled careerist.

Engels took an active part in preparing a split in the Social-Democratic Federation. The Left opposition members of this organisation, among them Marx's daughter Eleanor and her husband Edward Aveling, held meetings at his house. But he did not want to be associated with the Socialist League that was formed as a result of the split, until it had proved in practice that it would follow the right line. Soon afterwards, the Socialist League slid into anarchism and Engels's supporters parted company with it.

Engels reacted in much the same way to the Fabian Society (formed in 1884), which consisted mainly of intellectuals, scientists, and writers such as Sidney Webb. This society, which claimed to be socialist, was in reality nothing but a branch of the Liberal Party. It was a "clique of middle-class 'socialists' of diverse calibres, from careerists to sentimental socialists and philanthropists, united only by their fear of the threatening rule of the workers and doing all in their power to avert this danger by making *their own* leadership secure, the leadership exercised by the 'eddicated'." *

The latter half of the 1880s was distinguished by a tempestuous mass movement in England — unemployed struggles, the formation of new trade unions consisting of semi-skilled workers, and contentious strikes — the most significant of which

* Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 423.

was the strike of the London dockers in 1889. Engels hailed it with particular delight, regarding it as the beginning of a turn in the English working-class movement. He was overjoyed that in this movement in which the conservative spirit of the old trade unionism had long prevailed, there was now the fresh, revolutionary breeze of the new movement of unskilled and semi-skilled (dockers, gas workers, etc.) who would set the example for other sections of the proletariat.

He took an active part in this movement, gathering a small group of socialists including Eleanor and Edward Aveling and with them proletarians like Tom Mann, John Burns, Bill Thorne, and others. On his advice, the Avelings were highly active in London's working-class East End, agitating for the 8-hour day and for an independent political organisation of the proletariat. The Avelings, Burns, Mann, and others, played a prominent part in organising the strikes of the end of the 1880s, and in forming trade unions of unskilled workers.

An echo of this mass movement was the attempt, at the beginning of the 1890s, to form an independent political party of the working class. Engels reacted with sympathy to the formation of the Independent Labour Party in 1893, of which his supporters, the Avelings, Mann and others, became members. However, opportunists like Keir Hardie soon took the upper hand in it, and Engels's supporters withdrew.

"One is indeed driven to despair by these English workers," Engels wrote to Plekhanov in 1894, "with their sense of imaginary national superiority, with their essentially bourgeois ideas and viewpoints, with their 'practical' narrow-mindedness, with the parliamentary corruption which has seriously infected the leaders." *

* Marx and Engels,
On Britain, Moscow,
1962, p. 583.

So long as there were no mass socialist parties in a number of major countries Engels rejected the suggestions for founding a new world proletarian organisation on the grounds that this was untimely. He thought of a new International, which would unconditionally advance Marxist principles, and which would be not only a propaganda society, but, above all, a society for vigorous activity. But he thought the time was not yet ripe for it.

But by the end of the 1880s, when socialist parties had come into being in a number of European countries (Spain, Belgium, Norway, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, and so on), the socialists' striving for international unity increased. There also appeared the danger, however, that the leadership of the first international congress would be seized by the British trade unions, Hyndman's Social-Democratic Federation, and the French Possibilists. On spying this danger, Engels rushed into the fray like a young man to frustrate any attempt at forming an opportunist International.

Laying aside all his other affairs for more than three months, Engels took resolute measures. As a counterweight to the Possibilists, it was decided to convene an international socialist congress on the initiative of the French Workers' Party in Paris on July 14, 1889, on the day of the hundredth anniversary of the French Revolution. Engels criticised the party's leaders Guesde and Lafargue for tardiness and insufficient push in preparing the congress. He gave them practical advice, edited documents concerning the congress, and wrote countless letters. In letters to Bebel and Liebknecht, he advised the influential German party to come out forcefully against the Possibilist congress and to marshal socialists of other countries to oppose it as well. In addition, aided by friends and colleagues,

Engels came to grips with the leaders of the Social-Democratic Federation in England.

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Engels's fight against opportunists was essential if the Paris Congress, which in fact brought the Second International into being, was to be successful. Attempts of the Possibilists and the Social-Democratic Federation to dominate the new world organisation of the proletariat ended in failure.

Engels delivered a no less resounding rebuff to the plans of the reformist English trade union leaders, whom Marx had denounced at the Hague Congress, as being in the pay of the bourgeoisie and government, to convene an international workers' congress in 1893 (parallel to the congress of the new International) and thus seize leadership of the international working-class movement. Rallying the socialist forces to overturn these designs, Engels called upon them to show the union leaders that "the class-conscious continental proletariat had no intention of accepting the leadership of those who see the system of wage-labour as eternal and immutable".*

While fighting reformists and conciliators, Engels also took on anarchists and "Left" anarchist elements, and approved the decisions of the Brussels (1891) and Zurich (1893) congresses, which had not allowed anarchists to attend.

The Paris Congress decided to observe May 1st as a world festival of labour. Engels considered this the first international action of the militant proletariat. On May 1, 1890, he wrote a preface to the new German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, in which he traced the history of the *Manifesto* from the time of its appearance, and showed that, in a way, it reflected the progress of the working-class movement since 1848. He recalled that when, 42 years ago, Marx and he proclaimed the motto:

* Marx, Engels,
Werke, Bd. 38, S. 456

"Working men of all countries, unite!" not many had responded to it. Since then the movement had made tremendous headway, as was evident from the first May Day celebration of the international proletariat. "Today's spectacle will open the eyes of the capitalists and landlords of all countries to the fact that today the working men of all countries are united indeed. If only Marx were still by my side to see this with his own eyes!" *

Despite his age, Engels never missed a May Day demonstration of the English workers and was always present among the speakers on the lorry which served as a platform. He did not like speaking in public, being conscious that he was not much of an orator.

Engels attended the Third Congress of the International in Zurich. At the closing session he spoke first in English, then in French, and then in German. Deeply touched by the homage paid to him by the delegates, he declined to ascribe it as homage to his own person, but to himself "as the collaborator of the great man whose picture hangs up there". As he said this, he pointed to a portrait of Marx. "Exactly 50 years have passed," he said, "since Marx and I joined the movement after publishing the first socialist articles in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. Since then socialism has grown from a tiny sect into a powerful party before which the whole world of officialdom trembles. Marx has died, but if he had lived today no man in Europe and America could look back with the same legitimate pride as he at his life's work." **

His journey to the Zurich Congress, when he also visited Vienna and Berlin, developed into a triumph. Addressing public meetings in these cities he underlined, as he had previously in Zurich, that he personally did not merit the homage accorded him

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 104.

** Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, S. 408.

and that it was due to the great Marx whose companion he had been. "If I have been able to do something for the movement during the 50 years in which I have taken part in it," he said at the meeting in Vienna, "I ask no reward. You, yourselves, are my best reward... We have our people in the prisons of Siberia, we have them in the gold-mines of California, everywhere, all the way to Australia ... we are a great power now; we are to be feared, more depends on us than on the other great powers. That is my real pride. We have not lived in vain and can look back with pride and satisfaction on what we have accomplished." *

With the founding of the Second International the range of Engels's party and political activity widened. Since no permanently functioning central body of the new International had been set up in his lifetime, he assumed the duties of ideological leader, and also handled many of the organisational issues, such, for example, as coordinating joint action by socialist parties of different countries. He inculcated in the various parties a spirit of consistent proletarian internationalism, and considered ideological unity, equality and coordination, the foundation for action unity. For Engels it was axiomatic that parties of different countries should pass on their experience to each other, thus learning from each other. He observed developments in various parties, rejoiced at their successes, and hastened to point out their mistakes and help them rectify their line.

At that time Engels devoted considerable attention to the French Workers' Party headed by Guesde and Lafargue.

In letters to Paul and Laura Lafargue he pointed to the mistakes made at first by Lafargue and other socialists in relation to a movement headed by Ge-

* *Ibid.*, S. 410.

neral Boulanger, a political adventurer. Believing that one of the important tasks of the socialists in all countries was to fight against the growing danger of a world war, he insistently explained to Lafargue the grave danger of the Boulangist movement, which was shot through with a spirit of chauvinism and revenge.

Following the electoral success of the Workers' Party at the beginning of the 1890s, opportunist vacillations set in among some of its leaders who began to lay the emphasis in party work on electoral vote-catching. With a view to creating a more numerous parliamentary group, the Guesde followers and other socialists merged with the newly formed socialist parliamentary group headed by Millerand and Jaurès. In united group, where the Guesde followers formed a minority, the leadership passed in effect into the hands of Millerand and his supporters. This "marriage of convenience" was, in Engels's view, extremely dangerous and he warned against the subordination of the socialists to the Millerand people, whose practical programme was undoubtedly rather a radical than a socialist one, and, pointing to the eventual unavoidable rupture with these gentlemen, he suggested preparing for it in good time.

A year before his death, Engels sharply denounced opportunist views on the agrarian question. In doing so, he was motivated by the agrarian programme of the French socialists adopted at the Nantes Congress of the Workers' Party in 1894, and also by a number of opportunist statements by Vollmar, leader of the Bavarian Social-Democrats, on the agrarian question in Germany which had not met with the necessary rebuff of the leaders of German Social-Democracy.

In its agrarian programme, the Workers' Party

of France undertook to safeguard peasant property from ruin in the conditions of capitalist society, instead of explaining to the peasants the inevitability and advantages of switching under the leadership of the victorious proletariat from small individual farming to large-scale social production. The French socialists undertook to "save" the property not only of the small peasants but also of the tenant farmers who employed and exploited wage labour.

The French socialists were not alone to advance this opportunist thesis in their programme. At the Frankfurt Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party in 1894, Vollmar, who introduced the agrarian programme, suggested that it should include measures designed to safeguard peasants against ruin. In so doing, he referred to the Nantes Programme of the French socialists which, he alleged, had been approved by Frederick Engels. Engels, who disapproved of the opportunism of Vollmar and the Bavarian Social-Democrats under his influence, and who had demanded of Bebel organisational rupture with Vollmar, found it necessary to come out publicly both against the Nantes Programme and against Vollmar. In a letter to the editors of *Vorwärts* he declared that he had not approved but condemned the Nantes Programme, and that those who wanted to preserve the small peasantry in perpetuity, were seeking the economically impossible, sacrificing principle and sinking to reaction. This did not mean, of course, that the party itself should accelerate the ruin of the small peasantry; hence, in principle, one could not oppose measures aimed at making the inevitable ruin of the peasants less painful. But the Nantes Programme had gone beyond this. In the same letter he declared his intention to write in greater detail on

this question in the columns of the *Neue Zeit*. This he did in an article entitled "The Peasant Question in France and Germany" (1894). The article attacked the French socialists and Vollmar for taking the opportunist path of adapting the programme of the proletarian party to the small-property illusions of the peasantry.

Even before this, Engels had repeatedly pointed out that the influx of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry into the party was an indication that the proletariat had, in fact, become a leading class. But it would not be able to fulfil its historical mission of leader if it made opportunist concessions to petty-bourgeois and peasant illusions and aspirations.

It was precisely this kind of dangerous concessions that Engels saw in the Nantes Programme with its promise to perpetuate peasant ownership instead of explaining to the peasants that "capitalist large-scale production is absolutely sure to run over their impotent antiquated system of small production as a train runs over a pushcart".*

Engels also stressed the great importance of the peasant question for the socialist parties. To win political power, even in the industrially more developed countries, the socialist parties should go to the countryside and become a force there. While counselling the parties about the need for working in the countryside, Engels warned against the unprincipled drive for peasant votes, and against attempts to win over those strata of the peasantry who, by virtue of their position, could not side with the proletariat. He angrily rejected the provision of the Nantes Programme for protecting tenant farmers who exploited other people's labour, which he described as contrary to the basic principle of socialism.

* K. Marx and
F. Engels, *Selected
Works*, Vol. 3, p. 472.

He called for a differentiated approach to the peasantry and indicated the tactics that should be employed by the socialist parties up to and after the conquest of power in relation to the small, middle and big peasantry and, lastly, the big landowners.

Dwelling on what the attitude of the socialist party to the peasantry should be after the conquest of power by the working class, Engels was careful not to lay down hard and fast rules for switching small-scale peasant farming to collective socialist farming, since this would depend on the concrete circumstances in which the proletariat captured political power. He merely indicated the broad, common and basic features of the policy of the victorious proletariat in relation to the small peasantry. "It is just as evident," he wrote, "that when we are in possession of state power we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regardless of whether with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task relative to the small peasant consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private possession to cooperative ones, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose."*

Taking into account the peasant's attachment to his plot of land, Engels stressed that when the proletariat came to power, its party would do everything possible to make his condition more bearable and "facilitate his transition to the cooperative should he decide to do so, and even to make it possible for him to remain on his small holding for a protracted length of time to think the matter over, should he still be unable to bring himself to this decision".**

* *Ibid.*, p. 470.

** *Ibid.*, p. 471.

With regard to the big landed proprietors, the task of the proletariat upon winning power would be to expropriate them in the same way as the manufacturers in industry. Whether or not the expropriation would be by way of compensation would depend on the circumstances in which the proletarian party won power and also upon the attitude taken by the big landowners. "We by no means consider compensation as impermissible in any event; Marx told me (and how many times!) that in his opinion we would get off cheapest if we could buy out the whole lot of them."*

Engels's essay, "The Peasant Question in France and Germany", is highly important in terms of both theory and practice. It shows the importance of the alliance of the proletariat and the working peasantry not only for the future lot of the farmer, but also for the victory of socialist revolution. He substantiated in theory the manner in which small-scale peasant farming should be converted into large-scale socialist farming by way of cooperative production. The idea of peasant cooperatives as the intermediate step towards full-scale communist farming, Engels pointed out, was not just his own but also Marx's.** Looking into the future, Engels said the purpose of the general social directing agency was "to transform the peasant cooperative to a higher form, and to equalise the rights and duties of the cooperative as a whole as well as of its individual members with those of the other departments of the entire community".***

The criticism of the Nantes agrarian programme delivered a hard blow to opportunist elements not only in the French party, but also in other parties of the Second International, first and foremost the German Social-Democratic Party, which still re-

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 474.

** Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, S. 426.

*** K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 470.

tained its leading position in the international working-class movement.

At the time of the Exceptional Law, the Social-Democratic Party, thanks to combining legal and illegal work, thanks to the struggle waged against opportunism under the leadership of Marx and Engels, far from having become isolated from the masses, succeeded in adding to its influence. Indeed, it became the strongest party in the country.

The ruling classes became convinced of the futility of Bismarck's attempts to put an end to Social-Democracy by means of the Exceptional Law. In 1890, the Reichstag refused to prolong it, and the ruling classes adopted a "new line" and "soft" tactics, a policy of flirting with workers' movement.

In a farewell letter to the readers of the *Sozialdemokrat*, which ceased publication in view of the annulment of the Exceptional Law, Engels summed up the results of the heroic struggle waged by the German workers and their party against this law. Recalling 1848-49 and the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, he referred to the period of the Exceptional Law: "And this, too, was a revolutionary period, beginning from the moment when the Wyden Congress re-established the party and again began to fight 'with all means', both legal and illegal."*

Lauding this glorious period in the history of German Social-Democracy, Engels advised the party to preserve the illegal machinery created during the time of the Exceptional Law and thus be able to use it again in the event of the ruling classes repeating their attempt to outlaw it.

The new tactics adopted by the ruling class gave rise to a sharp debate in the party concerning its own tactics, and again it resulted in a crisis inside the party.

* Marx, Engels,
Werke, Bd. 22, S. 77.

First of all, there now appeared in the arena a "Left" opportunist opposition called the "Young", because it was headed by a group of young writers and students aspiring to the role of theoreticians and leaders. Oblivious to the need for utilizing available legal opportunities, this opposition demanded rejection of parliamentary activity and declared that the entire party was upholding the interests of the petty bourgeoisie, and had therefore become opportunist.

When the *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung*—organ of the "Young"—said that Engels had aligned himself with the opposition, Engels denounced this "colossal insolence" and took the opportunity to subject the theoretical views and tactics of the "Young" to withering criticism.

The theoretical views of the opposition, according to Engels, were simply an outrageous distortion of Marxism. He recalled what Marx had said about a similar "Marxism" in vogue towards the end of the 1870s among some French socialists: "*tout ce que je sais, c'est que moi, je ne suis pas marxiste*".*

Engels pointed out that the reckless tactics of the "Young" who were isolated from reality, "could destroy even the strongest party of millions of members to the merited laughter of everything hostile to it".**

Engels ridiculed the smugness and the delusions of the "Young" concerning their weight and importance in the party. He pointed to the path which a member of the party should follow and to the qualities which he should possess in order to occupy a leading post in the party. "Let them understand that their 'academic education', which, moreover, necessitates fundamental and critical verification, does not entitle them to officer's rank

* "I know only this, that I am not a 'Marxist'" Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, S. 69.

** *Ibid.*

with the right to a corresponding post in the party; that in our party each should begin his service in the ranks; that literary talent and theoretical knowledge are not by themselves sufficient for a leading post in the party, even when they possess one and the other, that what is needed besides is thorough acquaintance with the conditions of party struggle and familiarity with its forms, tried personal loyalty and strength of character and, lastly, voluntary enrolment in the ranks of the fighters; in a word, that these 'academically learned' people have, on the whole, to learn from the workers rather than the workers from them."*

The Erfurt Congress of the party (1891), by which time the "Young" had evolved more to the "Left", declared that unless their leaders submitted to party decisions they would have to leave. The opposition spokesmen demonstratively left the party congress and broke with the party; some of them slid into anarchism.

Along with the revival of the "Left" in the party, the ruling-class policy of "concessions" activated the reformist elements. After the abrogation of the Exceptional Law, the attacks of the Right wing found expression above all in the speeches of Vollmar. Vollmar, who saw in the government's "new line" a friendly attitude to the workers, expressed the tactics of Social-Democracy in the following formula: "To good will, we extend the open hand, to bad will—the fist." On the assumption that the government of the ruling classes could function "in the interests of the entire people", Vollmar revised the Marxist theory of the state. From this logically followed Vollmar's renunciation of revolution, and his claim that the new society would come about as a result of gradual peaceful evolution.

Vollmar was not alone in the German Social-

* *Ibid.*, S. 69-70.

Democratic movement who held these views. The changed tactics of the ruling classes led to a revival of Lassalleanism among petty-bourgeois elements in the party, to new reformist illusions. But while the party leadership had sharply and resolutely denounced the "Young", the Right reformist elements did not receive the necessary rebuff.

Engels feared that Liebknecht and the other leaders of German Social-Democracy would not be able to put an end to the growing attacks of the opportunists.

As for Kautsky, one of the party theoreticians, Engels noted some of his negative qualities: his inability of handling the materialist dialectics, philistinism, and lack of contact with the genuine party movement.

Bernstein, too, was a source of alarm, for he displayed a "comic reverence" for the Fabians.

Even Bebel with all his excellent qualities, whom Engels rated highest among the German Social-Democratic leaders, was not always staunch and consistent in the struggle against opportunists in the party.

The influence of the swelling opportunist elements, it seemed, would be felt in the draft programme which the party was to adopt at its Erfurt Congress in 1891 to replace the old Gotha Programme. This prompted Engels to suggest that Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and the covering letter to Wilhelm Bracke, which in 1875 were meant only for the eyes of the party leaders, and had not been made public, should be reproduced in the *Neue Zeit*. Engels sent the manuscript of the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* to Kautsky, editor of the *Neue Zeit*, with the reservation that if obstacles should arise to its publication, it should be forwarded to Victor Adler, leader of the

Austrian Social-Democrats, in Vienna, where it would be published without fail.

He knew, of course, that the publication of the document would ruffle the feelings of very many people in Germany.* And he was not mistaken. Showing their hurt, some party leaders stopped writing to him.

As an "antidote" to the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Kautsky reprinted in the *Neue Zeit* an editorial from the *Vorwärts*, the party's central organ. Written by Liebknecht, it said, among other things, that "the German Social-Democrats were neither Marxists nor Lassalleans—they were Social-Democrats". Countering the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, the article defended the opportunist principles that lay at the base of the unification in Gotha. "The purpose of the congress," it said, "was to unite the two factions, and not to formulate scientific principles. The choice was between a scientific ecumenical council and a socialist unity congress."** Here we have a truly classical definition of the rupture between theory and practice which subsequently became characteristic for the parties of the Second International.

Simultaneously, the Social-Democratic Deputy Grillenberger declared in the Reichstag that the party did not share Marx's views on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

These developments impelled Engels to drop another bombshell in the opportunist camp, this time in the shape of his Introduction to Marx's *The Civil War in France*. Here he denounced the superstitious reverence for the state widespread in Germany not only among the bourgeoisie but also among many workers. In contrast to the view that the state is an instrument for realising eternal truth

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 38, S. 12.
** *Die Neue Zeit*, 1891, S. 684.

and justice, Engels declared that the "state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy".* By way of example he cited the United States of America, where, he wrote, there are "two great gangs of political speculators, who alternately take possession of the state power and exploit it by the most corrupt means and for the most corrupt ends—and the nation is powerless against these two great cartels of politicians, who are ostensibly its servants, but in reality dominate and plunder it".**

To the opportunist theories of a gradual transition to socialism in the setting of a bourgeois state, Engels counterposed the experience of the Paris Commune, which had demonstrated that, upon coming to power, "in order not to lose again its only just conquered supremacy, the working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old repressive machinery previously used against it itself, and, on the other, safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials, by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any moment."***

Engels concluded his Introduction to *The Civil War in France* with the following words directly addressed to the opportunists in German Social-Democracy:

"Of late, the Social-Democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."****

He was impatient to deliver yet another blow to reformism and "parliamentary cretinism" in the

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 189.

** *Ibid.*, p. 188.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 187.

**** *Ibid.*, p. 189.

party. The draft of the new programme of German Social-Democracy, though it differed very favourably from the Gotha Programme, gave him, as he put it, "an opportunity to let fly at the conciliatory opportunism of the *Vorwärts* and at the filthy old mess growing *frisch-fromm-fröhlich-frei* [sprightly, devout, cheerful, free] 'into socialist society'".*

Criticising the draft programme that was to be debated at the Erfurt Congress of the party, Engels made a detailed analysis of the preamble (theoretical section) and its political and economic demands. The criticism of the political demands is of special interest.

Engels resolutely condemned the attempts to impose on the party the view that, under the existing political system in Germany, the Social-Democrats could realise all their demands in a peaceful, legal way. He was sufficiently careful not to tie his hands in the matter of the possible concrete forms of the transition to socialism in different countries. "One can conceive," he wrote, "that the old society may develop peacefully into the new one in countries where the representatives of the people concentrate all power in their hands, where, if one has the support of the majority of the people, one can do as one sees fit in a constitutional way."** But this was not the case in Germany, where the government was all but omnipotent and where the Reichstag, aptly described by Liebknecht as the "fig leaf of absolutism", had no real power. And Engels blasted the opportunist delusion that under such a political system it was possible in an idyllic, peaceful way to establish a republic, and not only a republic, but communist society as well.

Insisting on struggle against opportunism, Engels defines it in the following clear-cut terms: "This forgetting of the great, the principal con-

* Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 409.

** K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 434.

siderations for the momentary interests of the day, this struggling and striving for the success of the moment regardless of later consequences, this sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present ... is and remains opportunism, and 'honest' opportunism is perhaps most dangerous of all."*

Engels's critical remarks could not fail to make an impact. The draft programme was altered. Its theoretical part was based on a draft by Kautsky, touched up here and there by Engels. For a number of years, indeed, the Erfurt Programme served as a model for socialists in other countries.

At the Erfurt Congress, both "Left" and Right opportunist views were ruthlessly hit by Bebel, Singer, and others. But whereas the "Lefts" found themselves outside the party as a result, Vollmar and his followers, as Engels said, were more cunning and therefore more dangerous: they pretended compliance, and beat a temporary retreat.

In this struggle on two fronts—a struggle of tremendous international significance—Engels concentrated his fire on reformists, on supporters of "social harmony", the advocates of a peaceful, gradual growing over into socialism, whom he exposed as pseudo-socialists and enemies of the working class.

At the same time Engels firmly opposed those who denied the necessity of utilising "bourgeois legality" and extending socialist propaganda, strengthening proletarian organisations, and increasing the consciousness and solidarity of the proletariat. He attacked anarchist politicians who failed to grasp that legality enabled the Social-Democrats to win over ever-increasing numbers of people for the socialist revolution.

He warned the party, however, that the ever growing successes of Social-Democracy in Reichs-

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 435.

tag elections and the steady increase in its vote would, at a definite stage, grow into so grave a threat to those in power that one fine day they themselves would set about infringing their own bourgeois legality, resorting to violence against the working class and its party, and starting a civil war.

And true enough, the ruling classes soon began to fret about the legality which they themselves had established. In December 1894, a new bill against Social-Democrats was introduced on the pretext of an alleged design on their part to carry out a coup d'état.

In his Introduction to Marx's *Class Struggles in France*, which he wrote in March 1895, i.e., at the very moment the bill on preventing a coup d'état was being debated in the Reichstag, Engels showed that it was not the Social-Democrats, but the ruling classes who were interested in a coup. That was why they wanted to provoke the workers to premature action, to lure them out into the streets where guns shoot and sabres cut, and so turn them into cannon fodder.

Engels pointed out in his Introduction that street fighting had changed since the time of 1848 and 1871. The numerically stronger armies were incomparably better armed than before, railways could transfer them quickly from place to place, and the long straight streets of new buildings in the large cities facilitated operations by new kinds of guns and rifles.

"Does that mean that in the future street fighting will no longer play any role? Certainly not. It only means that the conditions since 1848 have become far more unfavourable for civilian fighters and far more favourable for the military. In future, street fighting can, therefore, be victorious only if

this disadvantageous situation is compensated by other factors.”* This passage, like the several others that Engels omitted on the insistence of the party leadership, is clear evidence that he had never denied the importance of street fighting in any future socialist revolution. He merely stressed that the militarily unfavourable relation of strength should be compensated by other factors. What other factors? In the street fighting, Engels answered, it would be necessary to switch from the old, passive barricade tactics to open offensive actions, and that called for far more considerable forces. A moral influence should be exerted among the troops, so that they should refuse to fire on the people. One of the party's most important tasks at this stage should be to prepare forces for the decisive battles, to win the broad mass of the people to the side of Social-Democracy, including the working peasants.

Engels's examination of the technical side of any armed uprising in the new conditions, coupled with a study of the political and moral factors, was a new word in the Marxist theory of armed uprisings as an art.

In his Introduction, Engels spoke of two fallacious extremes. He warned against subjectivism, voluntarism, and premature uprisings, on the one hand, stressing that the majority of the people and the army should be won over to the side of the proletariat first. On the other hand, while setting a high value on using parliament and other legal avenues for preparing the mass of the people for revolution, Engels avoided raising these forms of struggle to an absolute. He stressed that all avenues should be used — peaceful and non-peaceful, legal and underground, and added that it was essential to know how and when the class struggle should shift

* K. Marx and
F. Engels, *Selected
Works*, Vol. 1, p. 199.

from parliament to the arena of mass revolutionary struggle.

Writing the Introduction, Engels had to reckon with the views of the party leadership in Germany, who insisted that he should bear in mind the strained situation that prevailed in the country owing to the debate of the bill against a coup d'état, and to formulate some passages more carefully. But he let the editor of the party publishing house and Party Executive member Richard Fischer know what he thought on this score: "As I see it, you will gain nothing by preaching absolute abstention from force. No one will believe you, *no* party in any country goes so far as to waive the right to render armed resistance to lawlessness."*

Engels informed Kautsky of the whole thing on March 25, 1895: "My text has suffered somewhat from the irresolution of our Berlin friends who fear the bill ... an irresolution which, in view of the circumstances, I had to take into account."**

This, however, did not satisfy some of the Social-Democratic leaders, who resorted to downright falsification of the Introduction. One can easily imagine Engels's indignation when he saw an excerpt from it in the *Vorwärts*, printed without his knowledge and trimmed in such a fashion that he appeared as a "peaceful worshipper of legality at any price".*** He protested to Liebknecht, and demanded that the *Neue Zeit* should print the Introduction in full "to erase this shameful impression".

This shocking episode impelled Engels to inform the leaders of other parties about it, among them Lafargue. "Liebknecht has just played me a fine trick," he wrote to Lafargue on April 3, 1895. "He has taken from my introduction to Marx's articles on France 1848-50 everything that could serve his purpose in support of peaceful and anti-violent

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 39, S. 424.

** *Ibid.*, S. 446.

*** *Ibid.*, S. 452.

tactics at any price, which he has chosen to preach for some time now, particularly at this juncture when coercive laws are being drawn up in Berlin. But I preach those tactics only for the *Germany of to-day* and even then *with many reservations*. For France, Belgium, Italy, Austria, such tactics could not be followed as a whole and, for Germany, they could become inapplicable to-morrow.”*

Later, opportunists like Bernstein distorted the facts and asserted insolently that in the Introduction -- the last article written by Engels before his death -- he had changed his views and taken the reformist path. These people did not hesitate to malign the man who had devoted his whole life to the struggle for the socialist revolution and who had mercilessly exposed the danger of reformism and opportunism.

Engels believed that war, which was steadily approaching, would be one of the factors which might sharply change the conditions of the struggle for the German Social-Democrats, and consequently their tactics. He followed with alarm the preparations for war, the rapprochement of France and Russia as foreseen by Marx in the Address of the General Council of the International in 1870, and the formation of the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy). The approaching war, he emphasised, would be unprecedented in scale and destruction, and would be a world war rather than local. Since Engels did not live long enough to see the arrival of the imperialist era, he could not define the coming war as an imperialist war. But his extraordinary powers of anticipation enabled him to spot some of the main features of the incipient new era. A sketch entitled “The Stock Exchange” and some of the observations he added to Volume III of Marx’s *Capital* contain an exami-

* Frederick Engels, *Paul and Laura Lafargue. Correspondence*, Vol. 3, p. 373.

nation of such new developments in world capitalism as the appearance of joint-stock companies, the emergence of monopolies in the form of cartels and trusts, the growing role of the stock exchange and banks in industry and agriculture, export of capital, and, lastly, colonisation, which he illustrated by the carving up of Africa by the European powers.

In his articles, "Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism" (1890), "Socialism in Germany" (1891), and also in letters to socialists in different countries, Engels continued to describe tsarism as the bastion of European reaction against which the West European socialists should wage a life and death struggle. He saw Germany as a country where, in the near future, the conditions would be ripe for socialist revolution. A victory of Russian tsarism and France over Germany, he wrote, would throw back the German working-class movement for a long time. Hence, in the event of war, the German socialists should rally to the defence of their country. Real defence of Germany, he said, could be assured only by revolutionary methods, by the Social-Democrats coming to power and leading a revolutionary war such as the Jacobin war of 1793.*

Noting with alarm the growing danger of a world war, Engels called upon the socialists in all countries to launch a vigorous struggle for peace. In an article entitled, "Can Europe Disarm?" (1893), he raised his voice against militarism and the arms race, which would either economically ruin the nations or involve them in a universal war of extermination with unpredictable consequences. To counter this threat, Engels came forward with the first proletarian programme of struggle for peace, for arms limitation, for the gradual disband-

* The world war which broke out in 1914 differed in character from the war about which Engels wrote in his articles in the 1880s and the early 1890s. This, however, did not prevent the German social-chauvinists from attempting to cover their treacherous tactics—the tactics of supporting the predatory, imperialist war of their "own" government—by citing the standpoints Marx and Engels had assumed in completely different circumstances.

ing of standing armies and their conversion into a militia based on the general arming of the people. For him the historic significance of the impending socialist revolution was not confined to the emancipation of the working class and, together with it, all members of society without exception. It would also put an end to wars, which brought untold suffering to mankind. "The genuine international co-operation of the European nations," he wrote, "will become possible only when each will be the master in its own house."*

* * *

The sharpening international situation and the approach of a period of new revolutionary battles fired Engels's special interest in Russia and the prospect of a Russian revolution.

That vast country, spread over Eastern Europe and distant Asia and exerting a tremendous influence on European politics, had long attracted the attention of Marx and Engels. Their knowledge of Russian language and of Russian literature enabled them to gain a deeper knowledge of the country, with its huge population, with its culture, while their scientific theory enabled them to understand the process of social development in Russia far better than any of their contemporaries.

They observed the moulding of the social forces that were beginning to undermine tsarism from within, and the formidable discontent steadily growing among the peasantry as a result of their deteriorating condition.

In a number of articles Engels showed that the peasant reform of 1861 had only sharpened the social contradictions in Russia, making the left-overs of feudalism even more unbearable. "The great act

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, S. 283.

of emancipation," Engels wrote prophetically about the reform, "so unanimously extolled and glorified by the liberal press in Europe, has created nothing more than merely the solid grounds for, and the absolute necessity of, a future revolution."*

With the awakening of the peasantry and the growth of a revolutionary democratic movement, Marx and Engels began to look on Russia as a country that would give powerful impulse to the European revolution. "Russia forms the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe,"** they wrote in 1882, in a preface to the second Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto*.

Like Marx, Engels carefully studied economic developments in Russia, and followed Russian science and literature. His acquaintance with the advanced social thought in Russia, he wrote to Danielson in October 1893, enabled him to appreciate the intellectual and moral qualities of the Russian people—"a great and highly gifted nation". Engels believed in the Russian people, in their staunchness and their invincible strength. In another letter to Danielson, who had complained about the suffering brought upon the people in Russia by the development of capitalism and large-scale industry, he wrote: "A great nation like yours outlives every crisis."***

Engels held the Russian revolutionary youth in high esteem for their diligent and selfless search for scientific truth and genuine revolutionary theory. Marx in his time had noted that his *Poverty of Philosophy* (1847) and his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) were in greater demand in Russia than anywhere else. No less significant is the fact that the first translation made of *Capital* was into the Russian language. Having re-

* *Ibid.*, Bd. 19, S. 134.

** K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 100.

*** Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 39, S. 150.

ceived numerous reports about the interest of Russian scholars and revolutionary youth in *Capital*, Marx concluded that it was "more widely read and appreciated in Russia than anywhere else". Engels's works were also eagerly read in Russia, particularly his *Anti-Dühring*.

When the Russian exile, Eugenie Papritz, criticised Russian youth, Engels replied: "Are you not being somewhat unjust to your fellow-countrymen? The two of us, Marx and I, had no grounds for complaint against them. If certain schools were more notable for their revolutionary ardour than for their scientific study, if there was and still is a certain groping here and there, on the other hand a critical spirit has evinced itself there and a devotion to research even in pure theory worthy of the nation that produced a Dobrolyubov and a Chernyshevsky. I am not speaking only of active revolutionary socialists but also of the historical and critical school in Russian literature, which is greatly surpassing anything produced in this line in Germany or France by official historical science. And even among active revolutionaries our ideas and the science of political economy recast by Marx have always met with sympathetic understanding."^{*}

In the voluminous correspondence conducted with the Russian revolutionaries and socialists — Lavrov, Lopatin, Danielson (Nikolai — on), Vera Zasulich and others — Marx and Engels endeavoured to help the Russian revolutionaries to become conscious of the tasks which history had set them, to supplement their personal courage with knowledge of the objective laws governing the development of history, and with their understanding of the concrete conditions of the struggle in Russia and the tactics deriving therefrom.

^{*} Marx and Engels,
Selected Correspondence, p. 354.

Marx and Engels, therefore, resolutely opposed the utopian theories of the Narodniks, their deep-rooted views on the alleged original, non-capitalist development of Russia, on the socialist nature of the peasant commune, etc. Narodism was the main barrier to the spread of Marxism in Russia.

In the article against Pyotr Tkachov, "On Social Relations in Russia" (1875), and in a number of others, Engels showed how little Narodnik views had in common with the historical facts and Russian reality. Communal ownership of land was anything but a specific feature of Russia—it existed at a lower stage of development of other peoples too. Engels pointed to the erroneous assertion of the Narodniks who alleged that the Russian peasants, although owners, were closer to socialism than the propertyless proletarians in Western Europe.

He showed how the inexorable economic development, the industrial revolution in Russia, the expansion of the home market, and commodity relations, were undermining and disintegrating the commune, how economic inequality was growing in the commune, how usurers, kulaks and parasites (Engels often uses the transcription of the Russian word, *miroyed*) were appearing in the countryside alongside the landowners, how the peasants were being turned into proletarians. This proletarianisation, he said, was a particularly slow and tortuous process in the commune.

Did this mean that Russia, like the West, was fated to go through a long period of capitalist development and disintegration of the commune, or would communal ownership pass directly to the higher form of socialist ownership? Russian revolutionaries asked Marx and Engels this on several occasions.

In the preface to the Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto* (1882), they replied:

"If the Russian revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point for a communist development."*

In contrast to the Narodniks, Marx and Engels showed that common land ownership by itself, without the aid of the proletarian revolution in the advanced countries, could not give birth to socialism, since socialism presupposed, as an historical prerequisite, the existence of capitalist society with its developed productive forces and acute class contradictions. They believed, however, that given the victory of the proletariat in the more developed countries and with its active help, it would be possible to utilise the remnants of communal landownership in Russia as a means for considerably shortening the transition to socialist society.

Engels returned to the question of the commune after the death of Marx. In articles and in correspondence with Russian revolutionaries, he noted that in the time which had passed since he and Marx wrote their preface to the second Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, the break-up of common land ownership had progressed considerably and capitalist development had made rapid strides. These changes no longer permitted a reply to the question concerning the fate of the commune to be the same as that he and Marx had given in 1882. Ten years later, Engels wrote to Danielson: "I am afraid we shall have to treat the *obshchina* [commune] as a dream of the past, and reckon, in future, with a Capitalist Russia." **

* K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 100-01.

** Central Party Archives.

The appearance in Russia of the first Marxists, the Emancipation of Labour group, was hailed by Engels with enthusiasm.

"I am proud to know," he wrote, "that there is a party among the youth of Russia which frankly and without equivocation accepts the great economic and historical theories of Marx and has definitely broken with all the anarchist and also the few existing Slavophil traditions of its predecessors. And Marx himself would have been equally proud of this had he lived a little longer." *

For the revolution to win in Russia, Engels held, Russian revolutionaries representing the proletariat had first to learn Marxist theory. That, he amplified, was a paramount condition. "To me," he wrote to Vera Zasulich, "the historical theory of Marx is the fundamental condition of all *coherent* and *consistent* revolutionary tactics; to discover these tactics one has only to apply the theory to the economic and political conditions of the country in question." **

In his letters to Zasulich and Plekhanov, Engels endeavoured to help the Emancipation of Labour group to propagate Marxism and find the tactics suitable for the Russian conditions.

He warned the Russian Marxists against dogmatism and talmudism, which are foreign to the very spirit of the Marxist doctrine. Alexei Voden, Russian writer and Social-Democrat, recalled a meeting with Engels in London in 1893, when Engels expressed the wish that "the Russians—and not only the Russians—would not pick quotations from Marx or from him, Engels, but would think as Marx would have thought in their place, and that it was only in that sense that the word 'Marxist' had any *raison d'être*." ***

Praising the Emancipation of Labour group for

* Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 361.

** *Ibid.*, pp. 361-62.
*** *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 329.

spreading Marxism, Engels at the same time pointed out that it should engage in independent scientific elaboration of a number of problems and, first and foremost, the agrarian question in Russia. This, he said, was of tremendous significance both for the development of Marx's economic theory, especially the teaching on ground rent, and also for practical revolutionary activity in Russia. He said he wished that Plekhanov, whose brilliant talent he admired, should study this question, a basic one for Russia. This task, it will be recalled, was later carried out by Lenin.

During the last years of his life, Engels was pleased to note the spread of socialism in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the appearance of socialist outposts on the borders of Asia and along the shores of the Black and Aegean Sea. He counterposed tsarist proclamations and threats proudly with the socialist writings of the advanced fighters of the Russian proletariat.

Engels did not live to see the rise of a genuinely proletarian party in Russia. He did not see the Russian revolution which, as he had predicted more than once, would be a turning point in history.

Until the end, Engels's faith in the coming victory of the working class, in the inevitable onset of a new era in history—the era of communism—never wavered. When the editor of a new Italian weekly, *L'Era Nuova*, requested him to suggest a fitting epigraph to express the main idea of the coming new era as distinct from the old era, which Dante had epitomised with the words: "Some rule, others suffer", Engels replied with the prophetic words of the *Communist Manifesto*: "In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in

which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.” *

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Adviser and Leader of
Europe's Socialists

* * *

Although the inexorable and rapid flight of time was already registering his eighth decade, Engels retained the vigour of youth. Judging by his agile, strong and erect figure, with hardly a grey hair in head or beard, one would give him no more than fifty. He was younger still in spirit: he preserved a lively mind, love of life, and good cheer. In this respect, to quote Eleanor Marx, Engels was the youngest of all the people she knew. She recalled that during the visit to America in 1888, which he made in the company of Eleanor, her husband ** and his friend Karl Schorlemmer, the chemist, he was a jolly companion and conversationalist. He tramped the deck in all weather, and instead of walking round obstacles jumped or climbed over them. In addition to the American tour, Engels and Schorlemmer visited Norway in 1890.

Until the very end of his life, Engels had a tremendous capacity for work. To read the daily mail was by itself an imposing feat: every day the postman brought to his house in Regent's Park Road bundles of newspapers and letters in all European languages. And he found time to read them, reacted to all events, and wrote replies to his correspondents.

He worked methodically. As Paul Lafargue recalled, a rigid schedule was observed each day. "In his large, well-lighted studies, whose walls were lined with bookcases," he wrote, "there was not a scrap of paper on the floor, and all his books were in their places with the exception of a dozen or so on his desk.... He was just as particular about his appearance: he was always trim and scrupu-

* Marx, Engels,
Werke, Bd. 39, S. 194.
** Edward Aveling.

lously clean, always looking as though ready to go to a parade... I do not know anybody who wore the same clothes for such a long time without creasing them or making them shabby. He was economical as far as his personal needs were concerned and incurred only such expenses as he deemed absolutely necessary, but his generosity towards the Party and his Party comrades when they applied to him in need knew no bounds." *

His house was a mecca for people from all countries of the world. Conversation in many tongues was heard here, especially on Sundays when Engels entertained visitors. Those who had the good fortune to be present, always remembered those unforgettable Sunday nights which Engels enlivened with his wit, his attractive personality, and irrepressible gaiety.

But however great the stream of visitors, his hospitality was not offered to all. Long years of political activity had taught him to be wary of strangers or doubtful people. "There is one thing that Engels never forgives—deceit," wrote Eleanor Marx. "A man who is deceitful towards himself, and all the more towards his Party, finds no mercy with Engels." **

Notwithstanding his invaluable services to the international working-class movement, Engels, as before, was unusually modest. Once, upon learning that the choir of the German Workers' Educational Society in London intended to give a concert on the occasion of his birthday, he firmly requested them not to do so. "Both Marx and I," he wrote, "were always against public demonstrations in relation to individual persons with the exception of those cases when it had some kind of important purpose; and, above all, we were against those demonstrations which during our lifetime concerned

* *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 93.

** *Ibid.*, p. 188.

us personally.” ■ On his 70th birthday, when he was showered with telegrams, letters, and presents, and with articles lauding him in the party press, he wrote: “It is my destiny to reap the fame and the honour which were sown by a much greater man— Karl Marx. And I can only pledge to spend the rest of my life in active service of the proletariat, so that, if possible, I may come to be worthy of that honour.” ** Whereupon he begged permission to place the honours heaped upon him as a wreath of homage upon the grave of Marx.

“His love for the living Marx,” wrote Lenin, “and his reverence for the memory of the dead Marx were boundless. This stern fighter and austere thinker possessed a deeply loving soul.” ***

Engels bowed to the memory of Marx and was proud of the success of the cause for which the two of them had fought. But he was merciless to those who tried to blacken Marx and in this way injure the international working-class movement. He wrote a pamphlet against Brentano who had accused Marx of falsifying a quotation from Gladstone’s speech. In that pamphlet he adduced documentary proof and exposed the false charge. He sacredly guarded the memory not only of Marx, but also of his wife Jenny, who, as he said in his graveside speech at her funeral, “not only shared the fate, labours and struggle of her husband, but also actively participated in them with the greatest thoughtfulness and with ardent passion”. **** He transferred his affection for Marx to Marx’s children. “I have inherited from Marx the obligation,” he wrote to Kelley-Wischnewetzky, “to stand by his children as he would have done himself”. ***** He heaped care and concern upon Laura and Eleanor, and they saw in him a second father.

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, S. 264.

** *Ibid.*, S. 86.

*** V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 26.

**** Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 19, S. 291.

***** *Ibid.*, Bd. 36, S. 606.

He showed the greatest respect and gratitude to Helene Demuth—the devoted friend of Marx, his old housekeeper and practically a member of the family—whom Eleanor Marx described as the noblest of women. When Marx died, Helene (Lenchen) became housekeeper to Engels who, after the death of his wife Lizzie, lived alone. We learn of the role which this woman played in the life of the two friends from a letter written by Engels to Sorge on November 5, 1890, the day after Lenchen's death: "We were the last two of the old pre-1848 guard. Now I am alone again. It was largely due to her that Marx had peace to work for many years, and I myself for the last seven." *

He observed with sadness how the ranks of his old friends and colleagues were thinning, how the old proletarian guard were departing from life. Right until the very last he entertained the hope that he would live to the day "that would bring with it the triumph of the proletariat, abolish class antagonisms and wars between the nations and bring peace and happiness to the civilised countries".**

He hoped that he would still be able to take an active part in the coming decisive clash, and only regretted that now he was no longer able to ride horseback. Life for Engels meant work. And work meant fighting. The meaning of his life was seen by Engels in the struggle for the proletarian cause and mankind's radiant future. "When the day comes that I am no longer able to fight, let it be given me to die," *** he wrote in reply to the congratulations he received on his 70th birthday.

The years, however, had taken their toll. On December 4, 1894, he wrote to Sorge saying that at 74 he was no longer as vigorous as he used to be, though still strong, able to work, and fairly fit.

* Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 37, S. 498.

** *Ibid.*, Bd. 22, S. 443.

*** *Ibid.*, S. 87.

When he wrote these lines he was assailed by a terrible disease which the doctors concealed from him—cancer of the oesophagus. According to Victor Adler who was then in London, he endured the fierce pain “stoically, even with humour”.* Conscious that the end was drawing near, he awaited death with courageous calm.

Frederick Engels passed away on August 5, 1895, at 10.30 p.m. In his letter to the executors of his will, dated November 14, 1894, Engels declared that upon his death his body should be cremated and the ashes consigned to the sea.

In keeping with his wish, the funeral was an extremely modest one. Only relatives, intimate friends and colleagues from different countries, in all nearly 80 people, attended the funeral service at Waterloo Station on August 10. The German Social-Democratic Party was represented by Liebknecht and Singer; Bebel represented the Austrian Social-Democrats at their request; Lafargue was present from the French Workers' Party; Eleanor Marx, Aveling and Quelch represented the English working-class movement, Anseele—the Belgians, Vera Zasulich, Stepanyak (S. M. Kravchinsky)—the Russians. There were also representatives from Holland, Poland, Bulgaria and Italy. Funeral speeches were made by Engels's friend Samuel Moore, Paul Lafargue, August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht and others.

After the funeral service, Engels's body was cremated at Working, near London, with but a handful of people attending. On August 27, the urn with the ashes was brought to Eastbourne, Engels's favourite seaside resort, and consigned to the waves some distance from the shore.

The socialist press and most capitalist papers

* *Mohr und General. Erinnerungen an Marx und Engels*, Berlin, 1964, S. 593.

told the world of the loss suffered by the working class.

The obituary in *Letuchiye Listky* (Flying Sheets) published by the Free Russian Press Fund in London, said:

"We Russians cannot help gratefully remembering his ardent sympathy for the Russian revolutionary movement and his interest in everything Russian. He read Russian with ease and had read not only our economic writings but also our general literature, and always followed everything happening in Russia, in whose great revolutionary future he had faith despite the long period of calm. He knew of the tremendous influence that the works of Marx and himself had on the development of revolutionary thought in Russia, and was sincerely pleased." *

The young Russian Social-Democrat Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin) quoted the following deep-felt lines from the Russian democratic poet Nekrasov as the epigraph to his obituary article, "Frederick Engels":

*What a torch of reason has ceased to burn,
What a heart has ceased to beat!*

* * *

Engels, great thinker and revolutionary, had lived a long and stirring life. After his friend Marx, as Lenin noted, he was "the finest scholar and teacher of the modern proletariat".** He had contributed inestimably to the elaboration of scientific communism, and had stoutly defended and propagated Marxism.

Along with Marx, he had directed the revolutionary struggle of the working class, helping to

* *Their Names Will Outlive the Centuries. International Reactions to the Death of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels* (Russ. ed.), Moscow, 1983, p. 346.

** V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 19.

found and guide international and national proletarian organisations. After the death of Karl Marx, he had to his dying day played a most eminent part in the international socialist movement.

Frederick Engels died at the dawning of a new era, that of imperialism and proletarian revolutions. The working class now faced many a new and complicated question that Marx and Engels had not answered directly or exhaustively. It was now essential to follow in the footsteps of those two great friends and update their revolutionary theory to suit the new setting for the class struggle of the workers.

But precisely at this time Marxism found itself confronted with a serious trial. After the death of Engels, opportunists of the Bernstein type raised their heads, and began revising Marxism and its fundamental principles. In addition there appeared "Marxists" of the Kautsky variety, who turned the living and creative doctrine into dogma, into a sum of petrified formulas and quotations divorced from life.

And if at this period, when the fate of Marxism hung in the balance, the great revolutionary doctrine was saved from distortion and vulgarisation, the international proletariat and all progressive mankind owe a debt of gratitude for this to Lenin, a brilliant theoretician and leader of the working class, and to the genuinely Marxist party which he had founded.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Russia—a country where a bourgeois-democratic revolution was about to break out, which, according to all indications, was bound to develop into a proletarian revolution—found itself standing in the van of the revolutionary movement.

Lenin not only upheld Marxism against distor-







tion and vulgarisation. He had elaborated upon it and taken it a step further, suiting the experience of the working class of Russia and the experience of the worldwide movement of liberation. Lenin analysed the new situation, and enriched all the three components of Marxism — political economy, philosophy and socialism — with crucially important theoretical conclusions, thus starting a new stage in its development.

Lenin's greatest service was the founding of a party of a new type — the living embodiment of the organic unity of socialism and the working-class movement, of scientific theory and revolutionary practice. The October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917, which rang in a new era in the history of mankind, that of transition from capitalism to socialism, was a glorious triumph for Marxism-Leninism. Engels's prediction that the development of revolution in Russia would be a turning point in world history, had come true.

Under the guidance of the Communist Party, taking the path charted by Lenin, the people of the Soviet Union have built a socialist society. The Soviet social system is epitomised by freedom from any and all exploitation, from national oppression, and from the menace of crises, inflations, and unemployment. The Constitution of the USSR guarantees the basic human rights, such as the right to work and leisure, health protection, maintenance in old age and in the event of sickness and disability, the right to housing, to education, and the right to enjoy cultural benefits. The Soviet Union's genuinely democratic system guarantees all citizens active participation in the affairs of state and those of society.

The indomitable power of Lenin's ideas and socialism's immense advantages over capitalism are



also borne out by the socialist revolutions that have won in various European, Asian and American countries, by the emergence of the worldwide community of socialist states. The ideas of Marxism-Leninism are alive, and are winning ground. They are epitomised in the ever growing communist and working-class movement, in national liberation movements, and in the successes scored by the developing countries.

Communists act on the objective general laws and regularities governing the development of revolution and the building of socialism and communism, as defined in Marxist theory. In so doing they take into account the specific manner in which they make themselves felt from country to country, and treat the international and national as a dialectical, indissolubly linked unity.

Seeing that they cannot destroy Marxism-Leninism, its enemies resort to all sorts of refined stratagems in a bid to distort and dismember that monolithic revolutionary doctrine, to emasculate its revolutionary thrust.

One such stratagem is to oppose Marx to Engels, and thereby invalidate the enormous contribution that Engels had made to Marxism. But as Lenin said, "it is impossible to understand Marxism and to propound it fully without taking into account *all* the works of Engels".*

Just as unsound and ineffective are the attempts of the foes of Marxism-Leninism to oppose Marx and Engels to Lenin, and to portray Leninism as a purely Russian phenomenon. A whole revolutionary epoch in history is associated with Lenin and his activity. He has provided answers to the most burning questions posed in current history. He has elaborated upon the theory of socialist revolution and the theory of building communist so-

* V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 91.

ciety. He has given the revolutionary movement in Russia and the whole world a scientifically grounded strategy and tactics, and has stood at the head of the working-class struggle for the ideals of socialism. Transformed by Marx and Engels from a utopia into a science, and enriched by Lenin's conclusions and discoveries, socialism is being practised on a worldwide scale. It is the main revolutionary power of our times.

Applying the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism when working out their strategy and tactics, and summing up the experience of the working class and the mass of the working people in theoretical terms, the communist parties of the Soviet Union and other countries, are elaborating upon that living and creative revolutionary doctrine.

Nearly a hundred years ago, Engels called on the workers to counter the militarist plans of the ruling exploiter classes with a programme of struggle for lasting peace.

The Communists stand at the head of the mass of the people in the fight for the principles of peaceful coexistence, for detente, disarmament, and elimination of the war threat fraught with nuclear disaster.

Marxism-Leninism is the most humane vision of the world, and socialism and communism the most humane practice. Hence the immense power of attraction exercised by that great doctrine, whose spread is impelled by the objective realities of our era.

Shortly before his death, Engels spoke with hope of the increasingly close international unity of the working class. He wrote that an international army of proletarians had begun to shape, and that the twentieth century would see it win.

The twentieth century has, indeed, become an era of radical social change, thus living up to Engels's prediction. The worldwide revolutionary process is growing rapidly. Socialism's positions are gaining strength. The victories of the national liberation movements are opening new horizons to countries that have won independence. The class struggle of the working people against the monopolies and the exploitative order, is gathering momentum. The struggle of the peoples for peace is expanding all the time. The prestige and influence of the communist parties are increasing.

All this is evidence of the insuperable power and vitality of that great revolutionary doctrine of Marx, Engels and Lenin—a doctrine that is transforming the world.

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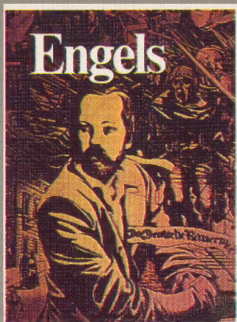
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